

GODHEAD IS LIGHT. NESCIENCE IS DARKNESS. WHERE THERE IS GODHEAD THERE IS NO NESCIENCE.



# BACK TO GODHEAD



THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

No. 55





# Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare

Each issue of *Back to Godhead* is intended to be relevant reading that one can relish throughout one's life. No one will read yesterday's newspaper because it is hackneyed and irrelevant; it has no lasting value. Nor can one gain permanent knowledge from reports of the mundane world, for what was certain knowledge yesterday is subject to completely change today. *Back to Godhead*, however, transmits the knowledge of the Vedic scriptures, which inform us of the eternal spiritual nature that is beyond this temporary material world. The activities of our bodies, families and nations are all temporary and therefore unreal, whereas our relationship with God as His servants is eternal, full of knowledge and joy.

*Back to Godhead* is meant to revive our original loving relationship with Kṛṣṇa, or God. Mundane journals report constant war, crime, violence, poverty and so on, but these miseries are all to be traced to man's forgetfulness of Kṛṣṇa. The real platform of peace and prosperity can be found in *Back to Godhead* in the understanding that Kṛṣṇa, God, is the proprietor of all that be. The science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is very sublime and serious but at the same time very easily understood. Foreseeing the materialistic turbulence of this age, the Vedic sages have recommended that one constantly hear about Kṛṣṇa and chant His holy name in order to attain the highest spiritual perfection. We humbly request you to inquire further and gradually enter the reality of the eternal world by reading *Back to Godhead* and chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra—

Hare Kṛṣṇa  
Hare Kṛṣṇa  
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa  
Hare Hare  
Hare Rāma  
Hare Rāma  
Rāma Rāma  
Hare Hare

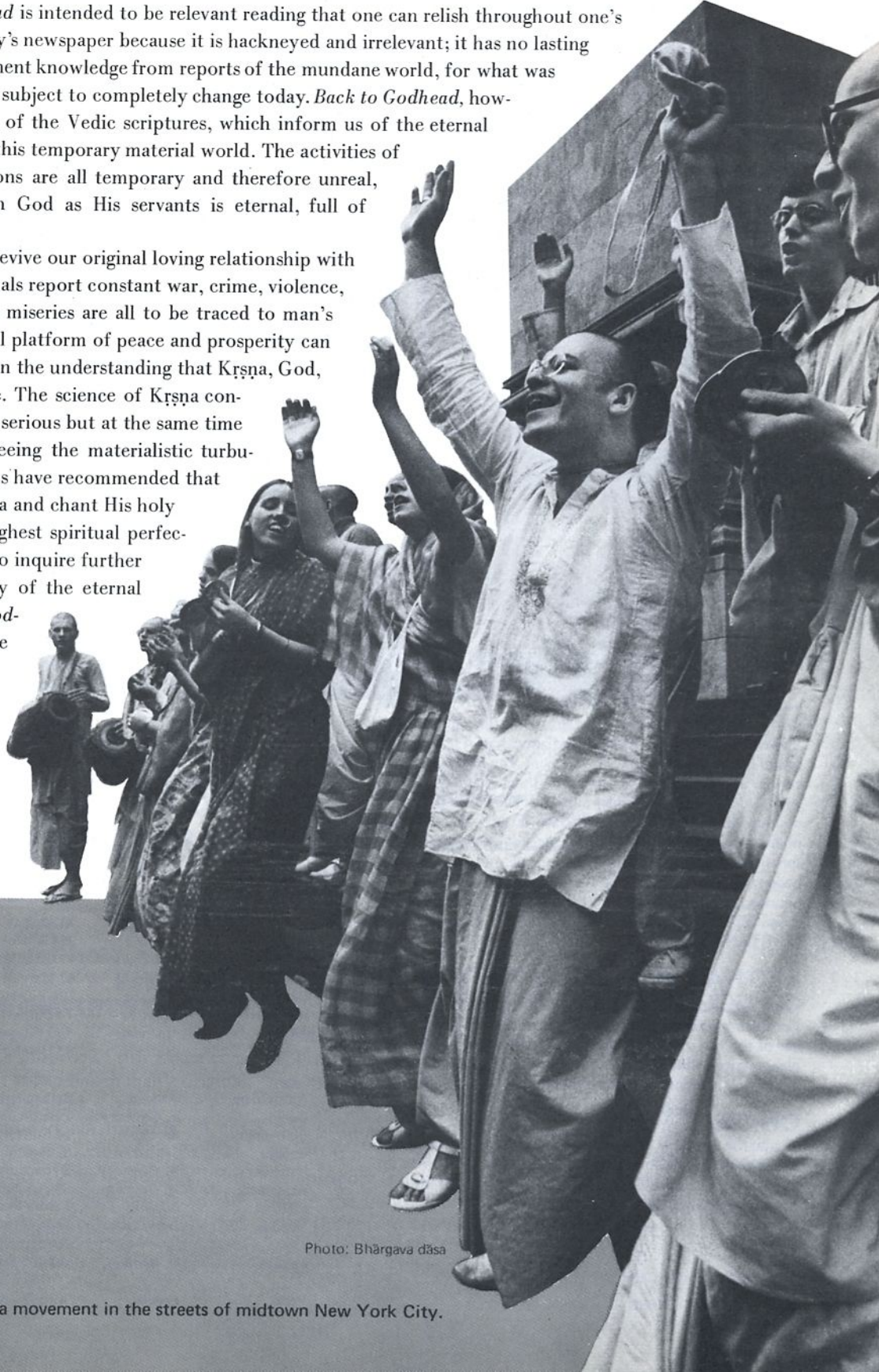


Photo: Bhārgava dāsa

Devotees of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement in the streets of midtown New York City.

# INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS CENTERS AROUND WORLD



## Founder

(under the direction of His Divine Grace  
Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda)

## His Divine Grace

A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda

Editor: Satsvarūpa dāsa

Bhaktivedānta Book Trust Coordinator: Bali Mardana dāsa  
Gosvāmī

Associate Editor: Jayādvaita dāsa

Sanskrit Editors: Nitai dāsa, Santoṣa dāsa, Jagannātha dāsa

Design: Indrapramada dāsa

Illustrations Staff: Muralīdhara dāsa, Yadurāṇī devī dāsī,

Bharadrāja dāsa, Parīkṣit dāsa, Puṣkara dāsa

Photographic Staff: Bhārgava dāsa, Muralīvadana dāsa,

Vilāsa-vigraha dāsa, Yaduvāra dāsa, Viśākhā devī dāsī

Production Staff: Rādhāvallabha dāsa, Navadvīpa dāsa,

Dhṛṣṭaketu dāsa, Rāgātmikā devī dāsī, Nara devī dāsī,

Donna DeAngelis

Published monthly \$4.50 per year (\$6.00 outside USA), by  
the Bhaktivedānta Book Trust, 3764 Watseka Avenue, Los  
Angeles, California 90034

Editorial Offices: 38 Tiffany Place,  
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11231

 Back to Godhead No. 56 © 1973 the Bhaktivedānta Book Trust  
All rights reserved. Printed in Japan.

## CONTENTS

The Test of the Genuine Guru .....	3
The Lifter of Govardhana Hill .....	10
Upon Him I Meditate .....	16
Letters .....	23
Acyuta, Drive My Chariot .....	28

## PRONUNCIATION OF SANSKRIT WORDS

Sanskrit words and names in *Back to Godhead* are spelled according to a system accepted by scholars throughout the world which indicates the exact pronunciation of each word. Vowels in Sanskrit are pronounced almost as in Italian. The sound of the short *a* is like the *u* in *but*, the long *ā* is like the *a* in *far* and held twice as long as the short *a*, and *e* is like the *a* in *evade*. Long *ī* is like the *i* in *pique*. The vowel *ī* is pronounced like the *re* in the English word *fibre*. The *c* is pronounced as in the English word *chair*, and the aspirated consonants (*ch*, *jh*, *dh*, etc.) are pronounced as in *staunch-heart*, *hedge-hog*, *red-hot*, etc. The two spirants *ś* and *ṣ* are pronounced like the English *sh*; *s* is pronounced as in *sun*. Thus *Kṛṣṇa* is pronounced KRISHNA, *Caitanya* is pronounced CHAITANYA, etc.

## INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS / MEMBERSHIP

For information on how you can become a registered member of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, please write to the Society's secretary at 3764 Watseka Avenue, Los Angeles, California, 90034.

## ON THE COVER

Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, picked up Govardhana Hill with one hand, exactly as a child picks up a mushroom, to save the residents of Vṛndāvana from devastating rainfall. (see page 14).

Durban Nairobi	S. Africa Kenya	AFRICA c/o Poptal Kara, 201 Grey Street P.O. Box 28946 (E. Africa)
Atlanta Austin Baltimore Boston Buenos Aires Buffalo Caracas	Georgia Texas Maryland Massachusetts Argentina New York Venezuela	THE AMERICAS 24 NE 13th St. 30309/ (404)892-9042 1003 E. 14th St. 78702 516 Cathedral St. 21201 40 N. Beacon St. 02134/ (617)782-8892 Ecuador # 473 132 Bidwell Pkwy. 14222/ (716)882-0281 Mariano Montilla No. 3, San Bernardino, Apartado 4345, Zona Postal 101/ 51-44-38 1014 Emerson St., Evanston 60201/ 312-475-9126 15720 Euclid Ave., E. Cleveland 44112/ (216)451-0418 5430 Gurley St. 75223/ (214)827-6330 1400 Cherry St. 80220/ (303)322-6661 8311 E. Jefferson Ave. 48214/ (313)824-6000 2016 McKinley St. 96822/ (808)949-9022 707 Hawthorne St. 77006/ (713)526-0475 641 Ramona Ave. 92651/ (714)494-9172 3764 Watseka Ave. 90034/ (213)871-0717 Gobernador Tiburcio, Montiel No. 45, San Miguel, Mexico City 18/ (905)515-4242 4001 Kumquat Ave., Coconut Grove 33133/ (305)448-7893 3720 Park Ave., Montreal 130, Quebec/ (514)849-4319 2936 Esplanade Ave. 70119/ (504)488-1313 RD No. 3, Moundsville 26041/ (304)845-2790 439 Henry St., Brooklyn 11231/ (212)596-9658 641 E. Chelton Ave. 19144/ (215)849-1767 7228 Thomas Blvd. 15208/ (412)683-7700 2507 NE Stanton St. 97212/ (503)284-6395 55 Jorge Romany, Santa Rita 00925 4544 Laclede Ave. 63108/ (314)361-1224 3303 Second Ave. 92103 455 Valencia St. 94103/ (415)864-9233 400 18th Ave. East 98102/ (206)329-9348 187 Gerrard St. East, Toronto 225, Ontario/ (416)922-5415 27 S Jarvis St., Vista Bela 1774 West 16th Ave., Vancouver-9, B.C./ (604)732-8422 404 34th St. 23451 2015 "Q" St. NW 20009/ (202)667-3516
Chicago Cleveland Dallas Denver Detroit Honolulu Houston Laguna Beach Los Angeles Mexico City	Illinois Ohio Texas Colorado Michigan Hawaii Texas California California Mexico	
Miami	Florida	
Montreal New Orleans New Vrindavana New York Philadelphia Pittsburgh Portland Rio Piedras St. Louis San Diego San Francisco Seattle Toronto	Canada Louisiana W. Virginia New York Pennsylvania Pennsylvania Oregon Puerto Rico Missouri California California Washington Canada	
Trinidad Vancouver Virginia Beach Washington	West Indies Canada Virginia D.C.	
Bombay	India	ASIA Hare Krishna Land, Gandhi Gram Road, Juhu Beach, Bombay 54 3 Albert Road, Calcutta 17/ 44-3757 45A Broadway, 15/Floor, Mei Foo Sun Chuen 179 Ortega St., San Juan, Rizal ISKCON International Center, P.O. Sree Mayapur Dham, W. Bengal (District Nadia) 66 Babar Road, Bengali Market 3-4-18, Shimo-Ochiai Shinjuku-ku/593-3603 Rādhā-Dāmodar Temple, Seva Kunj, Mathurā, U.P. Raman Reti, Mathurā, U.P.
Calcutta Kowloon Manila Mayapur	India Hong Kong Philippines India	
New Delhi Tokyo	India Japan	
Vṛndāvana Vṛndāvana	India India	
Adelaide Auckland Brisbane Canberra Melbourne Perth Sydney	Australia New Zealand Australia Australia Australia Australia Australia	AUSTRALIA 254 A Rundle Street, Adelaide, S.A. 67 Gribblehurst Rd., Mt. Albert/ 668-666 47 Mary St., Queensland 4000 104 Linestone Ave., Ainslie, A.C.T. 14 Burnett St., St. Kilda, Victoria 3182 500 Fitzgerald St., N. Perth, W.A. 6006 83 Hereford St., Glebe, N.S.W. 2037/ 660-7159
Amsterdam Berlin Edinburgh Geneva Hamburg Heidelberg London London	Holland W. Germany Switzerland Switzerland W. Germany W. Germany England England	EUROPE Bethanienstraat 39 (C)/ 020-253160 1 Berlin 65, Holzstr. 11/ 491-21-33 14 Forrest Road (U.K.)/ 031-225-4797 9, chemin du Credo, 1213 Petit Lancy/ 022-92-1318 2 Hamburg 54, Kapitelbuschweg 20/570-53-82 69 Heidelberg 1, Karlsruhestr. 31/ 31354 7 Bury Place, Bloomsbury WC1/ 01-242-0394 Bhaktivedānta Manor, Letchmore Heath, Hertfordshire/ Radlett 7244/5 8042 Oberschleissheim, Dr. Hoffmeister Str. 7 (München)/3150421 4 rue Le Sueur, Paris 16 <sup>e</sup>
Munich Paris	W. Germany France	



## THE TEST OF THE GENUINE GURU

An Interview in London with  
His Divine Grace  
**A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA**

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** The purpose of this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is to awaken man's original consciousness. At the present moment our consciousness is designated. I am thinking, "I am American," and you are thinking, "I am Englishman," or he is thinking, "I am American." But actually we do not belong to any of these designations. We are all part and parcel of God—that

is our real identification. If we simply come to that consciousness, all the problems of the world will be solved. Now due to our designated consciousness we are *thinking ourselves to be different* from one another, but if we come to Kṛṣṇa consciousness we shall come to know that we are one—the same spirit soul. The same spirit soul is within everyone, although it may be in a different dress. This is the explanation given in *Bhagavad-gītā*.

This Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is actually a purificatory process. *Sarvopādhi-vinirmuktam*. Its purpose is to make people free from all designations. *Tat-paratvena nirmalam*. In Kṛṣṇa consciousness we become purified, and when we are *purified our activities carried out by our purified senses* make us perfect. That is the ideal perfection of human life. This process is also very simple. It is not necessary for one to become a great philosopher, scientist or whatever. We need only chant the holy name of the Lord, understanding that His person, His name and His qualities are all

absolute. This Kṛṣṇa consciousness process is a great science; unfortunately in the universities there is no department for this science. Therefore we invite all serious men who are interested in the welfare of human society to understand this great movement, and, if possible, take part in it and cooperate with us. The problems of the world will be solved. This is also the verdict of *Bhagavad-gītā*, the most authoritative book of knowledge. Many of you have heard of *Bhagavad-gītā*. It is most important, for our movement is based on it. It is approved by all great *ācāryas* in India—Rāmānujācārya, Madhvācārya, Lord Caitanya and so many others. You are all representatives of newspapers, so now I am asking

are rejecting materialistic life and are trying to search for spiritual life. Actually this is the proper search. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the proper goal of life.

**Interviewer:** Presumably you would encourage this movement and encourage more people to participate.

**Prabhupāda:** Yes. Unless you take to this movement you cannot be happy. That is a fact. Therefore we invite everyone to study and understand this great movement.

**Interviewer:** What frankly worries me is that since the arrival in Britain some time ago of an Indian *yogī* who was the first *guru* that most people ever heard of, there have been a lot of people and a lot of *gurus* that have suddenly appeared out of nowhere. One gets the feeling sometimes

Photo: Bhārgava dāsa



"I am asking you to understand this movement. . .for the good of all human society."

you to try to understand this movement as far as possible for the good of all human society.

**Interviewer:** Your Grace, it seems to many people that there are probably more people in the world seeking some kind of new spiritual life. At least there is evidence of this. I wonder if you agree with that, and, if so, if you could tell me why.

**Prabhupāda:** That is an absolutely natural hankering. Because we are spirit souls, we cannot be happy in the material atmosphere. If you take a fish from water, it cannot be happy on land. Similarly, if we are without spiritual consciousness, we can never be happy. Today so many people are after scientific advancement and economic development, but they are not happy. So many of the young people are becoming hippies. They are acting in this way because they

that they are not all as genuine as they ought to be. I wondered whether you thought it would be right to warn the people who are thinking of entering into some kind of spiritual life that they should take care to make sure they have a genuine *guru* to teach them.

**Prabhupāda:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Do you feel there is such a danger?

**Prabhupāda:** Of course to search out a *guru* is very nice, but if you want a cheap *guru*, or if you want to be cheated, then there will be many cheater *gurus*. But if you are sincere, you will have a sincere *guru*. Because people want everything very cheaply, they are cheated. We ask our students to refrain from illicit sex, meat eating, gambling and intoxication, and consequently people think that this is all very difficult and is a botheration. But if someone else

says, "You may do whatever nonsense you like. Simply take my *mantra*," then people will like it. The point is that people want to be cheated, and therefore cheaters come. No one wants to undergo any austerity. Human life is meant for austerity, but no one is prepared to undergo austerity. Consequently cheaters come and say, "No austerity. Whatever you like, you do. Simply pay me and I'll give you some *mantra* and you'll become God in six months." All this is going on. If you want to be cheated like this, the cheaters will come.

**Interviewer:** But what happens if someone in all seriousness wants to find spiritual life and happens to finish up with the wrong *guru*?

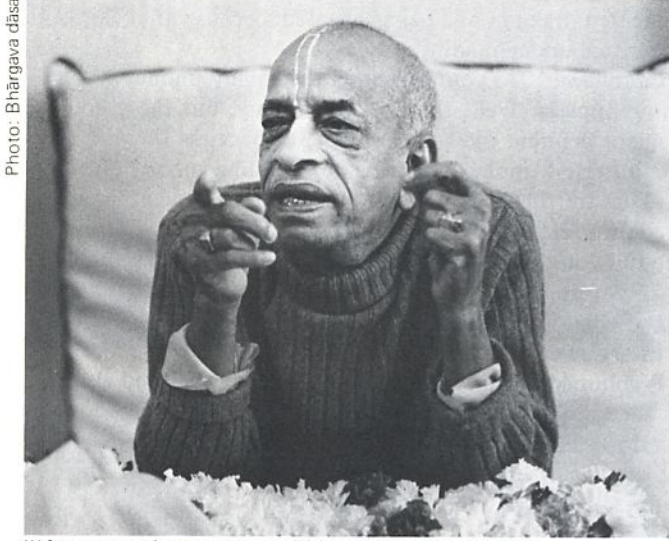


Photo: Bhārgava dāsa

"If you are sincere, you will have a sincere *guru*."

**Prabhupāda:** If one wants simply an ordinary education, he has to devote so much time, labor and understanding to it. Similarly, if one is going to take to spiritual life, he must become serious. How is it that simply by some wonderful *mantras* they can become God in six months? Why do they want something like that? This means that they want to be cheated.

**Interviewer:** And how does one tell that one has a genuine *guru*?

**Prabhupāda:** That of course depends on the person who is really anxious for a *guru*. When you go to the market to purchase some things, you test whether they are genuine or not. Similarly, you have to test whether the *guru* is genuine.

**Interviewer:** How can you tell if you don't know?

**Prabhupāda:** That requires a little education, a little knowledge. Therefore we are opening so many centers to give people an opportunity to know what is genuine and what is not.

**Interviewer:** How many followers do you have now throughout the world?

**Prabhupāda:** For anything genuine, the followers may be very little. For something rubbish, the followers may be many.

**Interviewer:** I meant initiated followers.

**Prabhupāda:** We have about three thousand.

**Interviewer:** It is growing all the time?

**Prabhupāda:** Yes, it is growing, but slowly. This is because we have so many restrictions. People do not like restrictions.

**Interviewer:** Where is your following the greatest? In America?

**Prabhupāda:** In America, Europe, Canada, Japan and Australia. And of course in India there are millions belonging to this cult. Apart from India, however, in other countries there are but small quantities.

**Interviewer:** Do you think your movement is the only way to come to know God?

**Prabhupāda:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** How do you have that assured?

**Prabhupāda:** From the authorities, from God, Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa says:

*sarva-dharmān parityajya  
mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja  
ahaṁ tvām sarva-pāpēbhyo  
mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ*

"Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reaction. Do not fear." (Bg. 18.66)

**Interviewer:** If one wants to become initiated in your Society, what does he have to do or not do?

**Prabhupāda:** First of all you have to give up illicit sex life.

**Interviewer:** Does that include all sex life? What is illicit sex life?

**Prabhupāda:** Illicit sex is sex without marriage. Animals have sex with no restrictions. In human society there are restrictions. In every country and in every religion there is some system, and that is the guide. Without marriage sex life is illicit. You must also give up all intoxicants. This includes tea, cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana—anything that intoxicates.

**Interviewer:** Anything else?

**Prabhupāda:** One also has to give up animal food. This includes meat, eggs and fish. One also has to give up gambling.

**Interviewer:** I think everyone lives in the temple, don't they?

**Prabhupāda:** Yes. Unless one gives up all these sinful activities, he cannot be initiated.

**Interviewer:** So one should give up one's family as well?

**Prabhupāda:** We are not concerned with families but with individual persons. If one wants to be initiated in this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, he has to give up all sinful activities.

**Interviewer:** And the family as well?

**Prabhupāda:** No.

**Interviewer:** But suppose I were to become an initiate—wouldn't I have to come and live in the temple?

**Prabhupāda:** Not necessarily.

**Interviewer:** I can stay at home?

**Prabhupāda:** Oh yes.

**Interviewer:** What about work? Does one have to give up his job?

**Prabhupāda:** You simply have to give up these bad habits and chant these beads. Chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*. That's all.

**Interviewer:** Would I have to give any financial support?

**Prabhupāda:** No, that is your voluntary wish. If you give, that's all right. And if you don't, we don't mind. We do not want to depend on anyone's financial contribution. We depend on God or Kṛṣṇa.

**Interviewer:** I wouldn't have to give any money at all?

**Prabhupāda:** No.

**Interviewer:** Is this one of the main things that distinguishes the genuine *guru* from the fake *guru*?

**Prabhupāda:** Yes, a genuine *guru* is not a businessman. *Guru* means a representative of God. Whatever God says, the *guru* repeats. He does not speak otherwise.

**Interviewer:** But would you expect to find a real *guru*, for instance, traveling in a Rolls Royce and staying in a penthouse suite or a top class hotel?

**Prabhupāda:** Sometimes people provide us with a top class hotel, but we generally stay in our own temples. We have *some sixty temples around the world, and we don't require to go to any hotels.*

**Interviewer:** I wasn't trying to make any accusations. I was merely trying to illustrate the fact that you have given a warning which I think is a valid one. There are so many people interested in finding a spiritual life, and at the same time there are a lot of people who are interested in cashing in on it. The point is that we should be able to distinguish one from the other.

**Prabhupāda:** Are you under the impression that spiritual life means voluntarily accepting poverty? Do you think like that?

**Interviewer:** Well, I don't, but I only thought that—

**Prabhupāda:** A poverty-stricken man may be most materialistic, and a wealthy man may be very spiritual. Spiritual life does not depend on one's living in poverty or wealth. Spiritual life is different. Consider Arjuna, for instance. Arjuna was a member of the royal family, and in *Bhagavad-gītā* Śrī Kṛṣṇa said: *evam paramparā prāptam imam rājarṣayo viduḥ: "This supreme science was received through the chain of disciplic succession, and the saintly kings understood it in that way."* (Bg. 4.2) In the past all kings who were saintly understood this spiritual life. Therefore spiritual life does not depend on one's material condition. A person may be a king or a pauper—whatever his material condition may be, he can still understand spiritual life. Generally people do not know what spiritual life is, and they unnecessarily criticize us because they have no knowledge of spiritual life. If I asked you whether you know what spiritual life is, how would you answer?

**Interviewer:** Well, I—

**Prabhupāda:** Because they do not know what spiritual life is, they unnecessarily say, "It is this," or "It is that." But first of all one should know what spiritual life is. Spiritual life begins when you understand that you are not this body. That is the real beginning of spiritual life. One thus comes to understand that, "I am spirit soul." The exact Sanskrit term for this realization is *aham brahmāsmi*. "I am spirit soul."

**Interviewer:** Yes, but how can one actually determine who is a cheater and who is not?

**Prabhupāda:** For that we have to become a little expert. If a person is a mechanic, he can understand things mechanical, and he can understand who is a valid mechanic. If you have no knowledge of machines, then how can you detect whether this man is a mechanic or not? So some little knowledge is required. If you want to purchase gold and know nothing about gold, then how can you understand whether this is gold or some other ore?

**Interviewer:** So how can people understand about a *guru*?

**Prabhupāda:** You have to be expert in spiritual knowledge. Then you can understand. Otherwise you will simply be cheated. People are being cheated because they have no spiritual understanding, education.

**Interviewer:** Do you think there are many phoney *gurus*?

**Prabhupāda:** Well, there may be many, but there are also many genuine ones. It is not that because there is some counterfeit money there is no genuine money. Both of them are there. You simply have to select whether one is counterfeit or not. I may give you a hundred dollar note, but if you do not know what is genuine, you will be cheated. Therefore it is up to you to find out what is counterfeit and what is genuine.

**Interviewer:** But how can you find out?

**Prabhupāda:** That means you have to be qualified also.

**A Disciple:** Once I remember John Lennon asked you, "How will I know who is the genuine *guru*?" And you answered, "Just find out the one who is most addicted to Kṛṣṇa. He is genuine."

**Prabhupāda:** But if someone does not know Kṛṣṇa, then how can he find out who is most addicted to Him? That is the test for one who is already aware of Kṛṣṇa. But if one is not aware of Kṛṣṇa, God, how can he find out? That depends on his fortune. If he is fortunate, he comes in contact with a genuine *guru*.

**Interviewer:** That is why I was asking about the Rolls Royce and the penthouse suites because that was a very simple way for a learner to be able to say, "Well, this man is in a Rolls Royce, so therefore—

**Prabhupāda:** That is not the test. Suppose a genuine *guru* is riding in a Rolls Royce. Do you think that just because he is in that car he is not genuine?

**Interviewer:** No, but—

**Prabhupāda:** Then why are you making this the test? First of all you have to accept that your position is that you do not know the test. Because you do not know, you conclude, "Oh, this man is going in a Rolls Royce. Therefore he is not genuine." But that is the wrong conclusion. You should know what is genuine. The genuine *guru* may go in a Rolls Royce or on foot, but that doesn't matter. What you have to test is whether or not he is genuine, and that will require your qualification. My point is that people are not given any spiritual education. Therefore they cannot understand what is genuine and what is not.

**Interviewer:** How do you think people should be educated then?



**Prabhupāda:** People should first be taught what they are. Are they the body or something else? That is the beginning of education. Now everybody is being educated to think that he is this body. Because one accidentally gets an Amer-

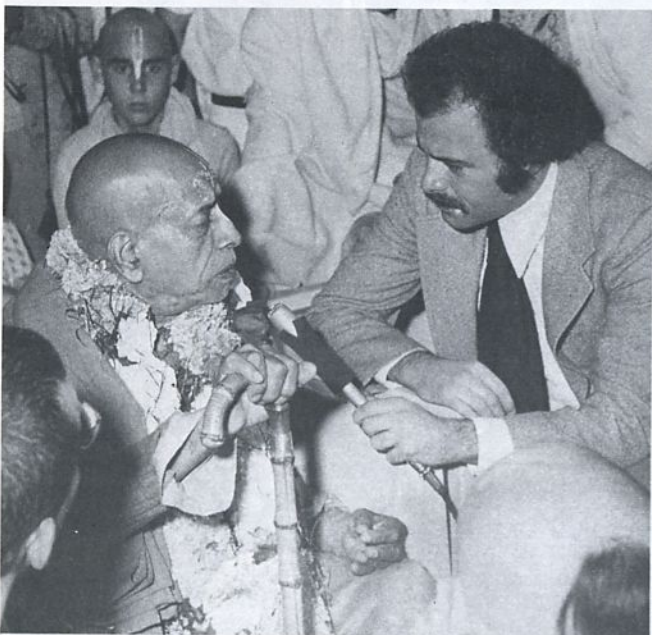


Photo: Bhārgava dāsa

ican body, he thinks, "I am an American." This is just like thinking, "I am red," just because you are wearing a red shirt. You are neither red, nor black nor white. You are a human being. Similarly, this body is considered to be a dress or a shirt or coat. If we simply recognize ourselves by our shirt and coat, then we have no spiritual education.

**Interviewer:** Do you think that such education should be given in schools?

**Prabhupāda:** Yes, in schools, colleges, universities: There is an immense literature on this subject, an immense fund of knowledge. But the people are not interested. We are publishing many books, and we can publish many thousands more like them, but people are interested in cheap novels and other books. They may read newspapers, but if we present some philosophical book they are not interested in reading it. They have lost all their taste.

**Interviewer:** Presumably if spiritual education were given in schools then we wouldn't have to worry about this problem.

**Prabhupāda:** Yes, that is so. What is required is that the leaders of society come forward to understand this movement.

"It is up to you to find out what is counterfeit and what is genuine." Below, Śrīla Prabhupāda and disciples in New York: "It is not a question of quantity but of quality."

Photo: Vilāsavigraha dāsa



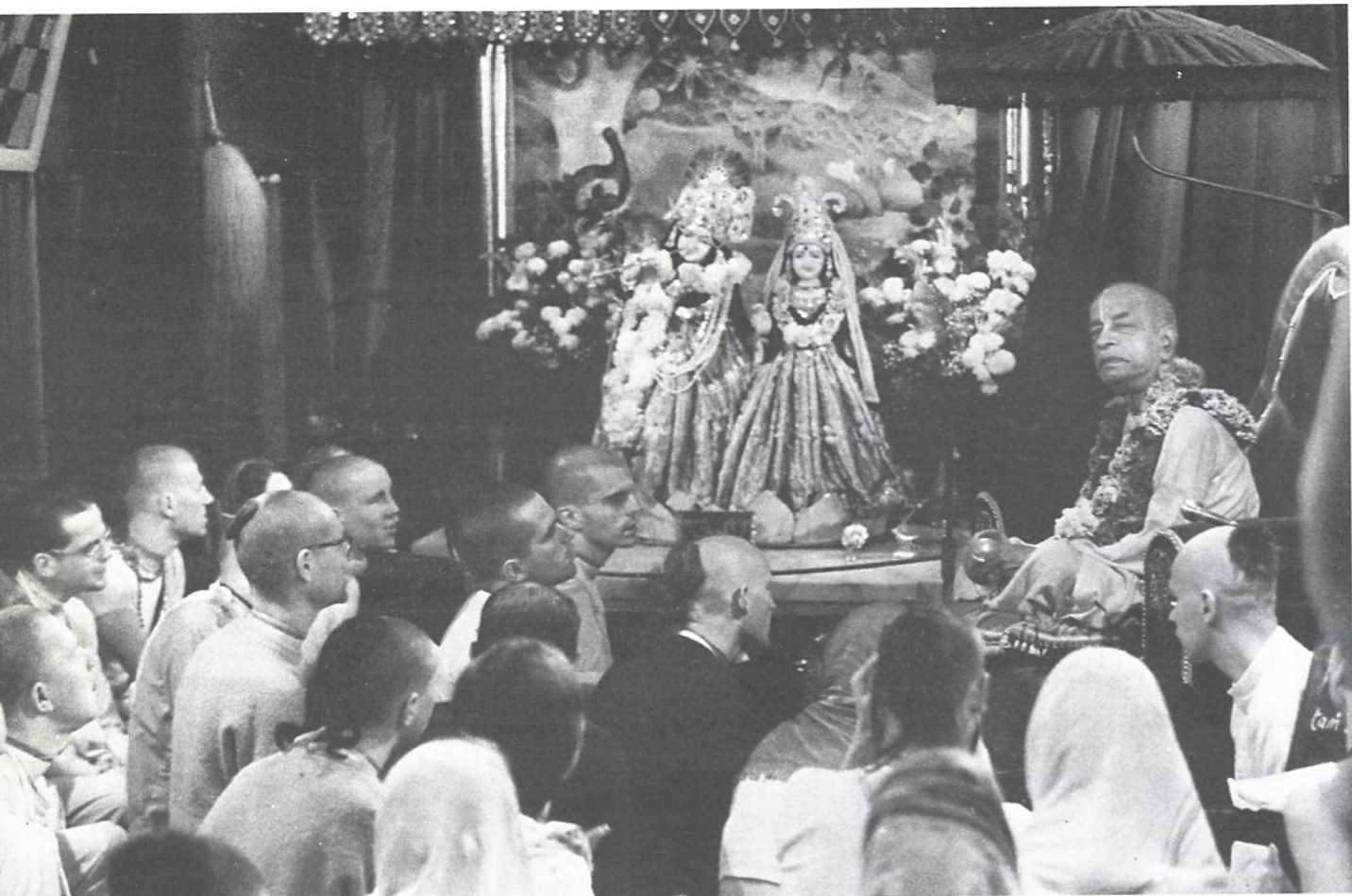


Photo: Bhārgava dbāsa

Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Deities preside as Śrīla Prabhupāda teaches disciples in London: "The real *guru* is God's representative, and he'll talk about God and nothing else."

**Interviewer:** Have you ever had people come to you who have been previously to a fake *guru*?

**Prabhupāda:** Yes, there are many.

**Interviewer:** And what has happened? Have they had their spiritual lives in any way spoiled by the fake *gurus*?

**Prabhupāda:** No, they are seeking something, and that is their qualification. As soon as one is genuinely seeking, God, who is within everyone's heart, helps.

**Interviewer:** I wonder if the real *gurus* like yourself have ever tried in any way to put a stop to the false *gurus*—that is, put pressure on them to put them out of business, so to speak.

**Prabhupāda:** No, that was not my purpose. I started my movement simply by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. I chanted in New York in a place called Tompkins Square Park, and gradually people began to come to me. So this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement gradually began to develop. Many accepted, and many did not accept. Those who are fortunate have accepted.

**Interviewer:** Don't you feel that people are suspicious because of their experience with bad *gurus*? If you went to a bad dentist and he broke your tooth, you might be suspicious about going to another.

**Prabhupāda:** Yes, naturally if one is cheated, he becomes

suspicious. But this does not mean that if one is cheated once, he will always be cheated. He should find out something genuine. Either one must be fortunate or well aware of this science. From *Bhagavad-gītā* we understand that the genuine seekers are very few. *Manuṣyāṇāṃ sahasreṣu kaścid yatati siddhaye*. Out of many millions of people there may be only one who is interested in spiritual life. Generally people are interested in eating, sleeping, mating and defending. So how can we expect to find many followers? First of all it is not difficult to notice that people have lost their spiritual interest. Those who are actually interested are all being cheated by so-called spiritualists. You cannot judge a movement simply by the number of its followers. If one man is genuine, then the movement is successful. It is not a question of quantity but quality.

**Interviewer:** I just wondered whether you knew that there are hundreds or thousands of people who have turned up with the wrong *guru*. I wondered how many people you think might have been taken in—

**Prabhupāda:** Practically everyone. (laughter) There is no question of numbering. Everyone.

**Interviewer:** So this would be thousands of people, wouldn't it?

**Prabhupāda:** Millions. Millions have been cheated because

they want to be cheated. God is omniscient. He can understand. He is within your heart, and if you want to be cheated, God sends you a cheater.

**Interviewer:** Do you think it is possible for everyone to attain the perfectional stage you spoke of previously? Is it possible for everyone?

**Prabhupāda:** Within a second. Anyone can attain perfection within a second provided he is willing. The difficulty is that no one is willing. For instance, in *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa says, *sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja*: “Simply surrender unto Me.” But who is going to surrender to God? Everyone says, “Oh, why should I surrender to God? I will be independent.” If you simply surrender, it is a second’s business. That’s all. But no one is willing, and that is the difficulty.

**Interviewer:** When you say that lots of people want to be cheated, do you mean that lots of people want to carry on with their worldly pleasures and at the same time, by chanting a *mantra* or by holding a flower, think that they can achieve spiritual life as well? Is this what you mean by wanting to be cheated?

**Prabhupāda:** Yes, this is like a patient thinking, “I shall continue with my disease, and at the same time I shall become healthy.” It is contradictory. The first requirement is that one become educated in spiritual life. Spiritual life is not something one can understand by a few minutes’ talk. There are many philosophy and theology books, but people are not interested in them. That is the difficulty. For instance, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is a very long work, and if you try to read this book it may take many days just to understand one line of it. The *Bhāgavatam* describes God, the Absolute Truth, but people are not interested. In the present age people are disturbed in so many ways. If, by chance, one becomes a little interested, he wants something immediate and cheap. Therefore he is cheated. Actually human life is meant for austerity and penance. That is the way of Vedic civilization. They first used to train boys up as *brahmacārīs*, and no sex life was allowed at all, up to the age of twenty-five. Where is that education? A *brahmacārī* is a student who lives a life of complete celibacy and obeys the commands of his *guru* at the *gurukula*. Now schools and colleges are teaching sex from the very beginning, and twelve or thirteen-year-old boys and girls are having sex, so how can they have a spiritual life?

**Interviewer:** I am told that in India you are the most sought after *guru*. I take it that this means you are a genuine *guru* and have all the knowledge—

**Prabhupāda:** How do you know that I am genuine? (laughter) What makes you think that I am genuine and another is not?

**Interviewer:** I don’t know that you are. I know only that you say you are and that what you say seems to make sense.

**Prabhupāda:** First of all I will give you some preliminary idea. The genuine *guru* is God’s representative, and he’ll speak about God and nothing else. The genuine *guru* is he who has no interest in materialistic life. He is after God and God only. That is one of the tests of a genuine *guru*.

*Brahma-ṅiṣṭham*. He is absorbed in the Absolute Truth. In the *Muṇḍakopaniṣad* it is stated, *śrotriyaṁ brahma-ṅiṣṭham*. “The genuine *guru* is well versed in the scriptures and Vedic knowledge, and he is completely dependent on Brahman.” One should know what is Brahman and how one is situated in Brahman. These signs are given in the Vedic literature. As stated before, the real *guru* is God’s representative. He represents the Supreme Lord just as a viceroy represents a king. The real *guru* will not manufacture anything. Everything he says is in accordance with the scriptures and the previous *ācāryas*. He will not give you a flower and tell you that you will be God in six months. This is not a *guru*’s business. A *guru*’s business is to canvass everyone to become devotees of God. That is the sum and substance of a real *guru*’s business. Indeed, he has no other business. He tells whomever he sees, “Please become God conscious.” Somehow or other if he canvasses on behalf of God and tries to get everyone to become a devotee of God, he is a genuine *guru*. So have you noted the definition of *guru*?

**Interviewer:** What about a Christian priest?

**Prabhupāda:** Christian, Mohammedan, it doesn’t matter. If he is simply speaking on behalf of God, he is a *guru*. Lord Jesus Christ, for instance, canvassed people, saying, “Just become a lover of God.” Anyone—it doesn’t matter who—be he Hindu, Muslim or Christian, is a *guru* if he convinces people to become lovers of God. That is the test. The *guru* never says, “I am God,” or, “I will make you God.” The real *guru* says, “I am a servant of God, and I will make you too a servant of God.” It doesn’t matter how one is dressed. As Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, “Whoever can impart knowledge about Kṛṣṇa is a spiritual master.” He does not say that the spiritual master is a person who always wants money and sells *mantras*. The genuine *guru* is not interested in collecting money but in getting people to become devotees of Kṛṣṇa, or God. He has no other business.

**Interviewer:** But the bad *gurus*—

**Prabhupāda:** If you understand what a genuine *guru* is, why are you trying to understand the opposite?

**Interviewer:** I was trying to understand how one can recognize a bad *guru*.

**Prabhupāda:** And what is a bad *guru*?

**Interviewer:** A bad *guru* just wants some money or some fame.

**Prabhupāda:** Well, if he is bad, how does he become the *guru*? (laughter) How can iron be gold or gold be iron? Actually a *guru* cannot be bad, for if he is bad he cannot be *guru*. You cannot say “bad *guru*.” That is a contradiction. You may say “false *guru*.” But that is not so important. What you have to do is simply try to understand what a genuine *guru* is. The definition of a genuine *guru* is that he is simply talking about God, that’s all. If he’s talking about some other nonsense, then he is not a *guru*. A *guru* cannot be bad. There is no question of a bad *guru* any more than there’s a red *guru* or a white *guru*. *Guru* is *guru*. All we have to know is that the genuine *guru* is simply talking about God and trying to get people to become God’s devotees. If he does this, he is genuine. Is that point clear?

**Interviewer:** Yes. Thank you very much. ❏





# the Lifter of GOVARDHANA HILL

by SATSVARŪPA dāsa GOSVĀMĪ

There are many religious scriptures teaching man about his eternal relationship with God, but the oldest among them are the Vedic literatures, which were compiled 5,000 years ago in Sanskrit. The special standard of the Vedic literatures is that while they contain all that is contained in other scriptures, the reader will also find in them information that is not to be found elsewhere. In the cream of these literatures, called the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (which has been presented in English by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda as *Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead*), we find the incident of Kṛṣṇa's lifting the Govardhana Hill.

Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, descended to earth 5,000 years ago and displayed childhood pastimes as the son of Nanda Mahārāja and mother Yaśodā in the cowherd village of Vṛndāvana, India. When He was only six years old He one day came upon His father and other elders of the community who were preparing a religious sacrifice in honor of the demigod Indra. Kṛṣṇa's whole purpose in descending to this material world was to teach everyone to worship the Personality of Godhead exclusively and thus be saved from all dangers and the reactions to all past sinful activities. Kṛṣṇa, therefore, intending to stop the sacrifice to the demigod, approached His father very politely and meekly said, "My dear father, what is this arrangement going on for a great sacrifice? What is the result, and for whom is it meant? Do you know what results to expect from this sacrifice?"

At first Nanda Mahārāja did not answer his son, thinking that He could not understand the intricacies of sacrifice, but when Kṛṣṇa persisted in His plea, Nanda replied that they were performing the sacrifice because it was traditional. This shows that Nanda Mahārāja was not a whimsical person, for any genuine spiritual practice must have the sanction of previous authorities who have passed down spiritual knowledge. In the case of the Indra sacrifice, however, the object of worship was a demigod, and therefore Kṛṣṇa suggested that the sacrifice be stopped. He had two reasons for

Back to Godhead 11

doing so. One was that He wanted to discourage demigod worship because its object is material benefit, which is always temporary. Only a less intelligent person engages himself in religion for material benefit. The other reason is that even if one wants material things, he should approach the Supreme Personality of Godhead directly. Kṛṣṇa Himself is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and He asks for surrender and devotional service unto Him. According to all learned spiritual masters, our rightful position is to serve Him.

Nanda Mahārāja offered objections to Kṛṣṇa's request, and there then followed a logical debate between Kṛṣṇa and His pure devotee Nanda Mahārāja. Our ISKCON artist has depicted Nanda Mahārāja gesturing in this debate while his transcendental son listens and prepares to put forward His own argument. These two principal figures are surrounded by cowherd men, boys and cows, and in the background is Govardhana Hill.

Child Kṛṣṇa had still another intention in stopping the Indra sacrifice, and that was to punish the demigod Indra, whom Kṛṣṇa knew was very puffed up with excessive pride. One may superficially think that a discussion about whether to worship a demigod is not relevant to modern times because no one worships or believes in demigods any longer. But this is not a fact. A demigod is a person who has power and influence far greater than that of an ordinary human. Generally, "demigod" refers to one of the inhabitants of higher material planets who have been entrusted by the Supreme Lord to manage the administrative affairs of the universe. For example, Indra is the demigod in charge of rain, Vivasvān is the demigod of the sun, etc. However, in a broader sense, any influential personality may be called a demigod, and the appeasement of such "big guns" to get favors from them is a process that is still going on. One approaches a movie star, a politician or a big industrialist in hopes that he will get his particular desires fulfilled if he pleases such an important personality. During World War II, for instance, there was a man in India who was profiting

greatly from sales on the black market, and considering that his success was due to the engineer of the war, Adolf Hitler, he arranged for worship of Hitler in his home. Such worship is in the modes of ignorance and passion. One never makes spiritual progress by approaching a big personality to get material benefits.

The great sage Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the original speaker to relate the incident of Kṛṣṇa and Govardhana Hill, cautioned those interested in spiritual life not to approach rich householders to beg for material necessities which can easily be gotten from nature. Śukadeva questions, "Why do you need a pillow if you have your soft arm? And if you need lodging, are the caves in the mountains stopped up? And as for food, are not the charitable trees still giving fruits?" The point is that one need depend only on the Supreme Lord, who is factually supplying all our needs, material and spiritual.

Lord Kṛṣṇa is the supreme religious teacher. Although His purpose was to teach worship of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, He at first spoke to His father as if He were an atheist. Kṛṣṇa's first point in their logical debate was that for prosperity the cowherd men did not have to worship the demigod Indra, but they had only to work diligently in their occupational duty of cow protection in their village of Vṛndāvana. Nanda Mahārāja argued back that simply to work was not enough to guarantee the result desired. For example, in spite of having the best care of a physician, sometimes a patient dies, or in spite of all the care and protection which parents give their child, the child dies or goes bad. In other words, material causes are not independent in themselves to bring about the results of activities; there has to be the sanction of the higher authority of Providence. Ultimately everything operates under the will of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord. A drowning man may be sent a rescue boat or thrown a rope, but if it is the desire of the Lord that this man die, no boat or rope can save him. The saying is, "Whomever Kṛṣṇa kills, no one can save. Whomever Kṛṣṇa saves, no one can kill."

Kṛṣṇa nullified Nanda's point in debate, however, by describing Indra to be like the head of a water department of a city government. One does not have to worship such an official privately in order to derive the benefit of water from him, for the head of the water department is duty-bound to give water to every good citizen. Therefore one simply has to tend to his own business occupation to get the facilities he needs; one need not personally worship a demigod. Kṛṣṇa argued that since the demigods cannot give good benefits to persons who have not executed their duties, the demigods are dependent on the execution of these duties.

Kṛṣṇa urged His father and the cowherd men to concentrate on the activities in their own local world of Vṛndāvana, where their duty was primarily to protect the cows. Indra, He said, was simply bound to deliver water; he even pours rain on the ocean, where no one worships him. Kṛṣṇa therefore requested His father to understand that his real relationship was with Govardhana Hill and Vṛndāvana Forest and nothing more. "My dear father," Kṛṣṇa said, "begin a sacrifice which will satisfy the local *brāhmaṇas* [the priestly order] and Govardhana Hill, and let us have nothing to do with Indra."

Influenced by Kṛṣṇa's words, Nanda Mahārāja offered a compromise. He would agree to do what Kṛṣṇa asked, but since all the paraphernalia had already been gathered for the worship of Indra, he suggested that they first perform that sacrifice and then afterward the Govardhana worship that Kṛṣṇa had suggested.

To this Kṛṣṇa replied, "My dear father, don't delay." Kṛṣṇa does not like wishy-washy compromises which fall short of exclusive devotion unto Him. Readers of the world-famous *Bhagavad-gītā* will recall that Arjuna, Kṛṣṇa's disciple on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra, also did not want to follow Kṛṣṇa's will in the beginning, and he offered compromises and delays, but Kṛṣṇa would not accept Arjuna's arguments. If we understand Kṛṣṇa rightly as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, what is the point of delaying our

surrender to Him? Nanda Mahārāja had already prepared to make an offering to the demigod for material benefit, but Kṛṣṇa said, "That doesn't matter. Take what you have, although it was intended for material gain, and use it in service to Me." This is also the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness as taught by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, the spiritual master of Śrīla Prabhupāda. Whatever talents or capacities one possesses should simply be turned over and engaged in

the service of Kṛṣṇa. Everything can be transferred to His account. This is sound philosophy. Because Kṛṣṇa is the supreme proprietor of all that be, we should rightfully engage everything in His loving service. That process will free us from bondage to suffering in this material world.

In the *Kṛṣṇa Book* it is described that all the residents of Vṛndāvana were absorbed in love of Kṛṣṇa and simply wanted to please Him. Nanda Mahārāja therefore yielded to his son's request and turned over command of the worship to Kṛṣṇa, who then began to dictate how He wanted the Govardhana sacrifice performed. This is one's rightful position; one should let Kṛṣṇa tell him exactly what to do. Lord Kṛṣṇa said, "Prepare very nice foodstuffs of all descriptions from the grains and butter collected for the sacrifice. Pre-

pare rice, dahl, then halavah, pakora, purī and all kinds of milk preparations like sweet rice and sweetballs and invite all the learned *brāhmaṇas* who can chant the Vedic hymns. Give nice grass to the cows. The sacrifice known as Govardhana Pūjā may immediately begin. This sacrifice will very much satisfy Me."

Because He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa is the only one who can rightfully speak in the imperative tone. If we think that we are God, we become offended to hear Kṛṣṇa ask for what is rightfully His. But since He is actually the Supreme, He should ask for nothing less than complete surrender and tell us, "Now do this. Now do that." This is also the position of the spiritual master, who is the servant of Kṛṣṇa. If one obeys the orders of the spiritual master, he will



become free of the false ego which keeps us bound to the cycle of birth and death in the material world.

Kṛṣṇa is sometimes called Kārtamīśa, which means "the boss of the cowherd village." It is said that in the morning in such villages the Kārtamīśa is asked what he would like to eat, and whatever menu he describes becomes the fare for the whole village. That is the relationship which we should have with the Supreme Kārtamīśa, Kṛṣṇa. Whatever He desires should be our desire. If we can satisfy Him, that will make us actually happy. Everyone should do what Kṛṣṇa wants. If we will accept Kṛṣṇa's desire as supreme, we will get far more than we could ever imagine by struggling on our own in the illusion that we are apart from Kṛṣṇa. We should all work as instruments for His satisfaction.

As far as Indra was concerned, he was suffering from a delusion which is common to such powerful personalities: he thought that he was the supreme controller, forgetting that even the greatest demigod is only part and parcel of the Supreme Personality of Godhead from whom everything emanates. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, therefore, with the purpose of chastising Indra, advised the cowherd men to stop the Indra sacrifice and begin the Govardhana worship. The honest and simple cowherd men headed by Nanda Mahārāja accepted Kṛṣṇa's proposal and executed in detail everything He advised. They performed Govardhana worship and circumambulation of the hill. Lord Kṛṣṇa then declared that Govardhana worship is just as good as worship of Him. In this way He identified with the land in which He displayed His pastimes. Therefore, ever since the inauguration of Govardhana worship, people in Vṛndāvana still dress nicely and assemble near Govardhana Hill to offer worship and walk around the hill, leading their cows. In all the temples of Vṛndāvana and outside of Vṛndāvana, huge quantities of food are prepared and sumptuously distributed to the general population.

When Indra understood that the sacrifice to be offered by the cowherd men was stopped by Kṛṣṇa, he became

angry, and to express his anger against the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana he ordered his most terrible cloud, which is usually saved only for the time of annihilation, to go to Vṛndāvana and inundate the whole area with extensive floods. Indra was deluded, thinking that he was the all-powerful supreme personality, for when demons become very powerful, they defy the supreme controller, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Indra, although not a demon, was puffed up by his material position and wanted to challenge the Supreme Lord. At least for the time being, he thought himself as powerful as Kṛṣṇa. Indra said, "Just see the impudence of the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana! They are simply inhabitants of the forest, but being infatuated with their friend Kṛṣṇa, who is nothing but an ordinary human being, they have dared to defy the demigods."

Ordered by King Indra, all the dangerous clouds appeared above Vṛndāvana and began to pour water incessantly with all their strength and power. There was constant lightning and thunder, blowing of severe wind, and incessant rain, which seemed to fall like piercing sharp arrows. Pouring water as thick as pillars, without cessation, the clouds finally filled all the lands of Vṛndāvana with water, and there was no visible distinction between higher and lower land. The situation was very dangerous, especially for the animals. Unable to find any other source of deliverance, they all approached Govinda, Kṛṣṇa, to take shelter at His lotus feet. They all began to pray to Lord Kṛṣṇa, "Dear Kṛṣṇa, You are all-powerful, and You are very affectionate to Your devotees. Now please protect us who have been much harassed by angry Indra."

Kṛṣṇa understood the deliberate exhibition of anger by Indra. "This demigod who thinks himself supreme has shown his great power," He thought, "but I shall answer him according to My position, and I shall thus take away his false prestige." Thinking in this way, Kṛṣṇa immediately picked up Govardhana Hill with one hand, exactly as a child picks up a mushroom from the ground. Thus He exhibited His transcendental pastime of lifting Govardhana Hill. He then addressed

the devotees, "My dear brothers, My dear father, My dear inhabitants of Vṛndāvana, you can now safely enter under the umbrella of Govardhana Hill, which I have just lifted. Do not be afraid of the hill and think that it will fall from My hand. You have been too much afflicted from the heavy rain and strong wind; therefore I have lifted this hill, which will protect you exactly like a huge umbrella." Seeing this mystic power of Kṛṣṇa, Indra was dumbstruck and baffled. He immediately called back the clouds and asked them to stop.

When the sky was completely cleared of all clouds, there was sunrise again, and the strong winds stopped. Kṛṣṇa, who was now known as the lifter of Govardhana Hill, said, "My dear cowherd men, now you can leave and take your wives, children, cows and valuables, because everything is ended. The flood has gone down, along with the swelling of the river." Kṛṣṇa held up Govardhana Hill for seven days. When the flood was over and all the residents and animals had left the shelter of the hill, Kṛṣṇa placed Govardhana Hill back in its position exactly as it was before. There was a great celebration in the heavens at this pastime of Kṛṣṇa's, and many demigods poured showers of flowers from the sky and sounded conchshells. All the people of Vṛndāvana, who were very affectionate to Kṛṣṇa, embraced Him and offered Him incessant blessings.

There is a class of unscrupulous men who declare themselves to be the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Even when they hear the Vedic descriptions of Kṛṣṇa, they attempt to imitate His pastimes such as His dealings of love with the *gopīs* or cowherd girls of Vṛndāvana. Such foolish pretenders sometimes gain followers who are even more foolish because they actually believe that any upstart can become the Supreme Personality of Godhead simply by declaring himself to be so. Such so-called *yogīs* and *svāmīs* who falsely pose as incarnations are challenged by this pastime of Govardhana Hill. A common man may try to imitate the loving pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and claim to be Kṛṣṇa Himself, but we can ask such false incarnations to perform some-





*Indra, the King of heaven, offered his humble prayers to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.*

thing as wonderful as Kṛṣṇa's lifting a mountain with the pinky of His left hand. Of course they cannot do this. We should understand that Kṛṣṇa comes to this earth to impart to us instructions about how to become God conscious. His teachings are meant to be followed, but His activities as the Supreme Personality of Godhead are wonderful pastimes which can never be imitated by a common man. Anyone who declares himself to be God but is unable to enact wonderful pastimes such as lifting Govardhana Hill is the worst of rascals and most preposterous of fools.

Indra, the King of heaven, was conscious of his offense before Kṛṣṇa. Therefore he stealthily appeared be-

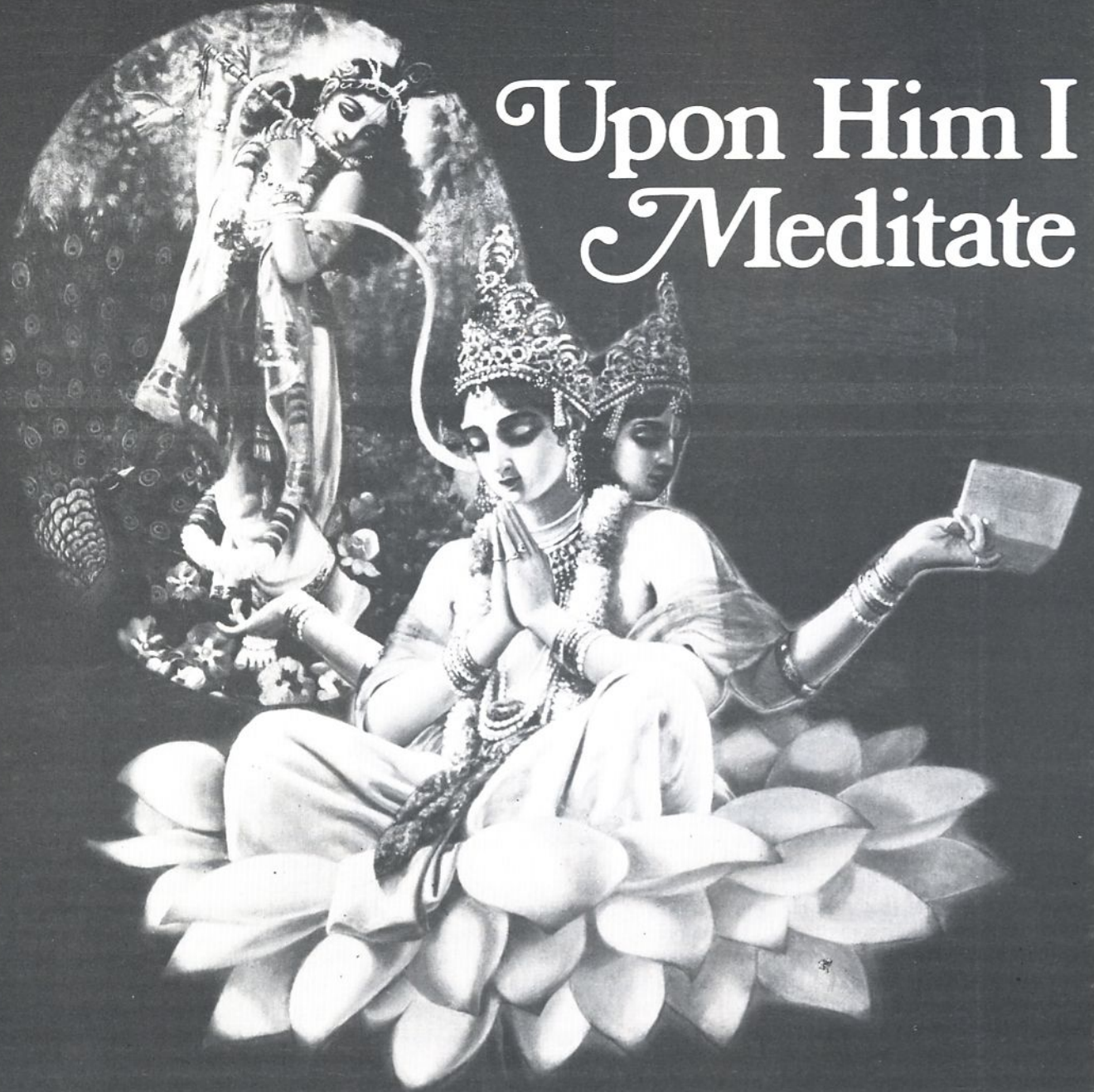
fore Him from a secluded place. Conscious of his subordinate position, he appeared before Kṛṣṇa with folded hands to offer prayers. "My Lord," Indra said, "I was a victim of false prestige. When I saw You stop the sacrifice, I thought that You were taking my share of the profit, and I forgot my position. There is no question of Your being my rival. You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and I am simply Your eternal servant, but due to my false pride I forgot that You are transcendental, beyond the disturbance of the material qualities. Your abode is accessible only for one who is completely freed from the onslaught of material qualities like passion and ignorance."

Indra appreciated Kṛṣṇa's right to chastise him and was grateful that Kṛṣṇa had tactfully removed his false prestige. Although Indra had vented all his power in the flood, Kṛṣṇa showed that this power could be thwarted simply by the pinky of His left hand. Indra saw himself as being grossly ignorant, and he thanked Kṛṣṇa for His kindness and mercy in destroying all his pride. Indra said, "I take shelter of Your lotus feet, my dear Lord. You are not only the supreme controller but the spiritual master of all living entities." After thus offering his humble obeisances, Indra took leave of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and returned to his heavenly kingdom.

Regarding the wonderful lifting of the hill, it can be stated that Kṛṣṇa does not need to lift a hill with His hand. He can vanquish the demons by His material energy and therefore does not need to personally appear on the scene. But He lifted Govardhana Hill just to please His devotees. By seeing Kṛṣṇa perform such a wonderful act, or simply by hearing of such activities, we can appreciate specifically the general truth that "God is great." By faithfully hearing of His transcendental activities one can develop love of Kṛṣṇa, which is the perfection of all existence. The most fortunate of all beings are those eternal associates of Kṛṣṇa such as the cowherd residents of Vṛndāvana who take part with Him in His activities in the eternal spiritual world. Anyone can aspire to join with Kṛṣṇa in His eternal, blissful realm, Kṛṣṇaloka. The only qualification is love of Kṛṣṇa, and such love of Kṛṣṇa is our original, constitutional position. We have now simply forgotten our original spiritual relationship, and therefore we have become entangled in temporary material relationships which are likened to the dreams of a sleeping man. For the purpose of awakening humanity's original love of Kṛṣṇa, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda is presenting the philosophy and activities of Kṛṣṇa from the Vedic literature. We strongly recommend our readers to turn to *Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead* to relish further the pastimes of the all-attractive Lord, the cause of all causes.



# Upon Him I Meditate



BY KARANDHARA DĀSA  
(ISKCON Los Angeles)

*om namo bhagavate vāsudevāya  
janmādy asya yato 'nvayād itarataś cārtheṣv abhijñāḥ sva-rāṭ  
tene brahma hṛdā ya ādi-kavaye muhyanti yat sūrayaḥ  
tejo-vāri-mṛdām yathā vinimayo yatra tri-sargo 'mṛṣā  
dhāmnā svena sadā nirasta-kuhakaṁ satyaṁ param dhīmahi*

"I offer my obeisances unto Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, son of Vasudeva, who is the supreme all-pervading Personality of Godhead. I meditate upon Him, the transcendent reality, who is the primeval cause of all causes, from whom all manifested universes arise, in whom they dwell and by whom they are destroyed. I meditate upon that eternally effulgent Lord who is directly and indirectly conscious of all manifestations and yet is beyond them. It is He only who first imparted Vedic knowledge unto the heart of Brahmā, the first created being. Through Him this world, like a mirage, appears real even to great sages and demigods. Because of Him, the material universes, created by the three modes of nature, appear to be factual, although they are unreal. I meditate therefore upon Him, the Absolute Truth, who is eternally existent in His transcendental abode, and who is forever free of illusion."

This is the first verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which was compiled by Veda-vyāsa as the perfect commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra*, the summary of all the *Vedas*. The very ancient knowledge of the *Vedas* was recorded by Veda-vyāsa 5,000 years ago, and after he thus recorded the range of Vedic knowledge, he summarized it all in the compact synopsis called the *Vedānta-sūtra*. The author of a huge voluminous work who wants to make its general information available to those who do not have the time or facility to study the whole work may write a synopsis. Thus after compiling all the *Vedas*, the *Upaniṣads*, the *Purāṇas* and *Mahābhārata*, Vyāsadeva found it necessary to summarize them in the *Vedānta-sūtra*. It then became known to him that even this *Vedānta-sūtra* was not sufficiently explicit to give a clear understanding of the *Vedas*. Seeing that it would be misunderstood, he thought it necessary to write a commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra* itself. This is the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the

natural commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra* written by Vyāsadeva himself.

### The Ripe Fruit of Knowledge

We therefore accept the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as the cream of all Vedic knowledge. From a cow we take milk, and from the milk we derive whey, buttermilk, etc., but the essence of the milk is the cream. Therefore *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is called the cream or essence of the *Vedas*, and sometimes it is also called the ripened fruit of the Vedic tree of knowledge. A tree has roots, a trunk, branches and leaves, but the quintessence of the tree is the fruit. The development of the tree culminates when a succulent, ripened fruit is produced. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is called the ripened fruit of the Vedic tree, for it contains the most sweet and essential knowledge. A tree is produced by the wonderful action of nature, and it produces a nice fruit which is for our benefit. We can take that fruit very happily, and thus the purpose of the tree is fulfilled. Similarly, it is described by Caitanya Mahāprabhu that *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, being the spotless *Purāṇa*, is the fruit of Vedic knowledge.

If one simply understands *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, all of the Vedic knowledge is known to him. Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, a great Vaiṣṇava *ācārya* (Kṛṣṇa conscious spiritual master), once observed that if all the books in the world were burned today and none were left but *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, there would be no lack of knowledge. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* consists of twelve cantos containing about 18,000 verses. The very first verse, which is the invocation, explains the purpose of the entire work.

### The Identity of the Supreme

In the very beginning Vyāsadeva wants to make clear the purpose of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Thus he begins, *om namo bhagavate vāsudevāya*: "I offer my respectful obeisances unto

the Supreme Lord." *Bhagavate* indicates the Supreme, the greatest of all. If one is the greatest athlete, the greatest movie star or the greatest scholar, he can be called the supreme in that respect. Thus "supreme" refers to the greatest; no one can be greater than or equal to the Supreme.

Vyāsadeva writes, *om namo bhagavate vāsudevāya*: "I offer my respectful obeisances unto the Supreme, or God." (*Bhagavate* also means God.) He particularly uses the word *vāsudevāya* to indicate the son of Vasudeva and Devakī. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is said that Kṛṣṇa is the son of Vasudeva and Devakī. Thus the complete meaning of this statement is, "I offer my respectful obeisances unto Kṛṣṇa, that particular son of Vasudeva and Devakī who is the Supreme God." In the very first line of this verse, therefore, Vyāsadeva gives us direct and pertinent information regarding the subject matter of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. It is Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the son of Vasudeva.

The first aphorism of *Vedānta-sūtra* states, *athāto brahma-jijñāsā*: "Now is the time to understand the purpose of life." What is the proper utilization of our advanced intelligence, and what is the purpose of life? These questions constitute *brahma-jijñāsā*, or inquiry about the Supreme Absolute Truth. If one studies very carefully and is able to derive the proper perspective from the *Vedas*, he can understand that the overall purpose and design of Vedic knowledge is threefold.

There are three categories of Vedic understanding. *Veda* means knowledge, and to assimilate *Veda* is to assimilate knowledge. The three categories of knowledge are given as *abhidheya*, *sambandha* and *prayojana*. *Sambandha* refers to knowledge of our relationship with the Supreme Lord, *abhidheya* refers to the process of developing that relationship and approaching God, and *prayojana* is the perfection of the re-

◀ As described by Vyāsadeva, Brahmā, the first created being, meditated upon Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who enlightened him from within his heart.

lationship. Thus the goal, purpose and design of the *Vedas* is to understand our relationship with God, function according to that relationship, and go back home, back to Godhead. That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or God consciousness.

The verse continues, *janmādy asya yataḥ*. This refers to the Supreme Lord as "He from whom everything emanates." This is scientific information of the Supreme Lord. There are many scriptures in the world which give information that God is great, God is good, etc., but *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* scientifically sets forth detailed information about God in order to clear up all misgivings or unclear points about what God is.

### Scientific Meditation

To forward the rendering of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Vyāsadeva is meditating in this way. He meditates upon Lord Kṛṣṇa as the cause of all causes from whom everything springs. This is an analytical definition of God: He is the cause of all causes. God cannot be caused by anything else; rather, everything must be caused by Him. Furthermore, if God causes everything and brings everything into existence, He must also be the maintainer; it is by His energy that creation is maintained. Similarly, He is also the destroyer. Thus the total import of *janmādy asya yataḥ* is "He from whom everything emanates and by whom everything is created, maintained and destroyed."

With this scientific information, one can meditate upon Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Lord from whom everything comes. Thinking in this way, we can consider that everything comes from Him, including birds, flowers, air, water, body, mind, the universe, the sun, the stars and everything else. All is created by Him. Furthermore, all is maintained by Him. One may think himself the maintainer of his family, his body or his dog, but that is relative maintenance. Actually there is a higher maintainer than us. We are relative maintainers. For example, I may go to a job, earn a salary and go to the store to buy some food to maintain myself, but who has created the food? The farmer may say that he has produced the food, since he planted the seed and



When Kṛṣṇa appeared as a child before Vasudeva and Devakī, He revealed to them His four-armed expansion as the all-powerful Lord Viṣṇu. Thus Kṛṣṇa, the son of Vasudeva and Devakī, is the Supreme Godhead.

watered it, yet he is not the absolute producer but only a functionary in that production. By nature's way the seed grows into a grown plant. Science cannot duplicate this process. Thus the food is produced by nature, which is under the direction of the Supreme Lord.

We cannot claim that we can create or maintain anything; rather, we act as functionaries. When someone builds a house, he brings lumber, nails, plaster and labor and thus assembles it. He cannot actually say, therefore, that he is the creator of the house, but rather he is a functionary in that creation. He has not created the wood nor the metal, but he has only arranged these materials in a certain way after nature produces the raw ingredients.

Thus we are neither the creators nor maintainers. We utilize that which is provided for us. For example, we are maintained by the air and the sun, which are supplied without effort on our part. Similarly, although we know that everything that comes into existence in the material world, including our bodies, our minds and even our planet, is eventually destroyed by the influence of time, we are not the controllers of all this. One body is destroyed and another created under the direction of a higher order, a higher force—a creator, maintainer and destroyer. This is not a religious sentiment, but these are scientific facts that we have to accept. Therefore Vyāsadeva meditates in this way: "I am thinking, I am worshipping, I am pon-

dering about and meditating upon He from whom everything emanates, by whom everything is maintained, and by whom everything is destroyed.”

### The Supreme Controller

Furthermore, God is the controller of everything. This is another clue to meditation. Kṛṣṇa is directly and indirectly controlling everything. In the *Bhāgavatam* it is said that nothing, not even a blade of grass, moves without the will of the Supreme Lord. Therefore it is also explained here that everything is either directly or indirectly under His control. This is quite logical and scientific. In accordance with whatever strength or capacity I have, I exercise some control. If I had a colony of ants, I could exercise a great amount of relative control over those ants, and similarly a stronger individual can exercise the same degree of control over me.

Yet we have not found anyone who can claim that he is the supreme controller. There have been many politicians, soldiers, statesmen and famous personalities who have come and gone with the passing of history. They have performed their pastimes and exercised some temporary control, and now they are all gone. At present, President Nixon is controlling very powerfully in the United States, but in fifty years he will be gone, and there will be little memory of him. That is the nature of relative control. That is not supreme control, for God is eternally the supreme controller. He always has been the controller, always is the controller, and always will be the controller, both directly and indirectly.

Truly enlightened souls (and Vyāsadeva, the compiler of all the *Vedas*, is among the most enlightened) consider the *Vedas* the supreme authority in detailed information of God. There must always be some authority. A standard must always be set. For example, how do we know how long a foot is? There is a government bureau of standard weights and measures that keeps a golden rod of a certain length designated as one foot. If we want to manufacture a ruler, it has to come within a certain tolerance of this rod in order to qualify as legally represent-

ing a foot. That is the standard. If someone wants to make a ruler, he must agree to accept that standard. We cannot say that we do not accept it, for if we say that a foot is a different length than the standard rod, who is to decide? There will be complete chaos. Thus in order to come to any conclusion or common ground, we must find an accepted standard. Of course, the example of the rod is relative and material, but there is no such material relativity in spiritual consideration. All different schools of transcendental science accept the *Vedas* as the supreme standard. If I want to prove something, I must be able to back it up with Vedic injunctions.

According to the Vedic standard of transcendental knowledge, one cannot simply make wonderful statements. One must be able to quote from the *Vedas*, and in order to fully support any philosophical statement, one must be able to review, correlate and integrate all the Vedic aphorisms. They are all in harmony, but sometimes people will take a small portion, divorce it from the rest, and, not understanding its overall pertinence, make a statement out of proper context. We therefore sometimes see disagreements or conflicts between different camps of Vedic knowledge, but this is due to shortsightedness. We must therefore take the correct understanding from Vyāsadeva, the original author himself.

Vyāsadeva informs us that God is the supreme controller. Although we are not very much in control, there is someone in control. It is a nonsensical theory that there is no supreme controller. In the morning the sun comes up, but I can neither demand that the sun come up earlier nor force it to go down earlier because the sun is independent of my control. Someone, however, is controlling it. One should not conclude that because he or his fellow men cannot control it, no one can. That is called frog philosophy, for a frog who cannot see beyond the length and breadth of his own pond concludes that the pond is everything. That we simply cannot imagine how anyone can control the sun does not mean that the sun is not controlled.

Everything in this material universe has a particular design and order; there is no question of randomness. Scientists should know this. When an experiment is performed in a science class, there is a certain reaction when chemicals are combined. If a professor inquires from a student why this reaction occurs and the student says that it is random and there is no meaning or controlled reason, that is nonsensical. It is not at all a scientific answer. There is a reason, and one must factually understand it.

There is a reason why everything is going on as if designed under conscious control. That we cannot perceive it directly or through deduction does not mean that it does not exist. For example, in Los Angeles, where this article is being written, all the civic activities are now going on—trash is being picked up, the police are on duty, etc.—but I cannot fully understand how. Although I am not participating in these activities, however, they are going on anyway. I cannot say that nothing is happening or being controlled except where I am involved and aware of it. That would be foolish. Similarly, everything is going on under some control, whether we know it or not. That is a scientific fact, and it is God who is doing this controlling. He is the Supreme, He is the cause of all causes, He is the creator, maintainer, and destroyer of everything, and He controls everything. This information is given by the Vedic literature.

### Consciousness Beyond Time and Space

Continuing, Vyāsadeva says that the Supreme is *abhijñāḥ*, fully cognizant. It is said that God is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent, and these words are very significant. “Omni” indicates that He has no limit. His energy extends everywhere to infinity. Infinity extends not only within 180 degrees or a certain distance but everywhere. I have some potency, and I may be able to push you over with my potency, but certainly I cannot push over a large building. Therefore my potency is limited. But the word “omnipotent” refers to one who has no limit to his potency. Similarly, “omnipresent” indicates that He is present everywhere—



between the atoms, in the fire, in the sky and everywhere else.

Again, there is a very clear contrast on this point between the Supreme and ourselves. We are not omnipresent. Our presence is limited by time and space. If I am present in one room, I cannot be present in another room at the same time. This is a clear example of how we are not omnipresent. Our consciousness is not everywhere; it is limited. But God is *abhijñāh*, cognizant everywhere. I can pinch my body, and I can feel it, but you cannot feel that pinch. But God, Kṛṣṇa, is everywhere and can feel everything. It is in this way that Vyāsadeva is meditating. Whether we accept or reject his meditations is another matter, but Vyāsadeva is thinking, "I meditate upon Him who is present everywhere."

Furthermore, the Lord is *sva-rāṭ*, or fully independent. However independent one thinks he is, we can actually prove to him that everyone is dependent. We are dependent on the light of the sun, upon our paychecks, and upon the conditions of material nature. If lightning came and struck us, we would be finished. Where is the question of independence? We are fully dependent upon material conditions. But Vāsudeva, Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, is independent. He doesn't need anything for His maintenance and sustenance. He exists to maintain everything else. This is the import of *sva-rāṭ*, which is the next aspect in which to contemplate the Supreme Lord.

### Enlightening the First Being

Next Vyāsadeva says, "*tene brahma hṛdā ya ādi-kavaye*": "I worship the Supreme Lord Vāsudeva, Kṛṣṇa, who imparted knowledge to the first created living being, Brahmā." We receive knowledge from our parents, teachers, brothers and sisters; in many ways we take knowledge from others because when we come into this life we are not in knowledge but in ignorance. Similarly, Brahmā, the first created living being, received knowledge from the Lord. We are created by our mothers and fathers, who in turn are created by their mothers and fathers, and if we could trace out our ancestry to its very beginning, we would come to the in-

dividual named Brahmā, who is the first created living being. He was born first, and from him all other population has sprouted. Therefore, how did Brahmā acquire knowledge? God enlightened him through consciousness. If my teacher is conscious and I am conscious, he can teach me, and there can be a transmission of knowledge. Therefore *tene brahma hṛdā ya ādi-kavaye* indicates that the Supreme Lord imparted knowledge to Brahmā through consciousness. Both God, the Supreme, and Brahmā, the first created being, are conscious. Thus the Supreme Lord gave knowledge to Brahmā directly by enlightening him from within his heart.

God is situated within the heart of every living being. This is another aspect of the Supreme upon which one can meditate. He imparts knowledge unto us also because although it has become widely dispersed and different parties have claimed proprietorship, all knowledge within the universe originally comes from Brahmā and has been handed down through time. And Brahmā received his knowledge from Kṛṣṇa. Thus the full significance of the words *tene brahma hṛdā ya ādi-kavaye* is that knowledge comes to everyone by the agency of the Supreme Lord. This is another way in which Vyāsadeva is meditating. It is his desire to present knowledge of the Supreme, and in order to synthesize his enlightenment and gain inspiration, he is meditating in this way on the Lord, thus fixing his mind.

The state in which one fixes his consciousness by viewing the Supreme from many different angles is called *samādhi*, or trance. In that state of *samādhi* one is fully God-conscious. This verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* serves many purposes, for it not only informs us of Vyāsadeva's meditation but gives us an opportunity to concentrate in the same way. If we want to become God conscious, we can follow the example of Vyāsadeva in meditating upon the Supreme.

### Illusioned Demigods

Vyāsadeva next considers, *muhyanti yat sūrayaḥ*. According to the Vedic literature, the universe is governed by powerful living beings who are called

*devas*, or demigods. For example, in the United States government there is a president, vice-president, secretary of state and many cabinet members, all of whom serve functions in the workings of the state. Since we never see these officials, the government may seem impersonal, but still these individuals influence our lives. Thus although the government seems like an impersonal force, actually the government consists of individual persons. The government includes entire structures and organizations, but individual persons take care of each branch. If we want to discuss taxes we go to one branch, if we want to talk about agriculture we go to another branch, etc. In this way everything has been organized according to categories. Similarly, according to Vedic information the universe is also organized in this way under the supervision of individual personalities.

To give another example, I recently visited a big company in Japan where there are ten thousand workers. It was almost inconceivable how there could be so many workers in one company, and I could not see the length and breadth of that company's plant. How much greater, then, are the operations of the entire universe? The sun is coming up and going down, the rain is coming and going, etc., all according to a designed order systematically governed by laws. It is a huge, organized affair with personalities in key posts to see that everything goes on properly.

We receive our mail every day because there are hundreds of men employed to deliver it. Similarly, the sun comes up every day because there are hundreds of thousands of individuals who are responsible for this. We may not be able to imagine their potency because we think that it is significant to be able to lift a three hundred pound barbell, what to speak of the sun. But although it is beyond our imagination, someone is doing it. This we learn from Vedic information. The *Vedas* warn us not to think that something cannot exist merely because we cannot conceive of it. That is gross ignorance.

The demigods are almost like God, for they have a great deal of control and power. This, of course, is relative.

For example, when compared to the ants, we can be considered demigods. Similarly, just as we can squash an ant in one step, there are other living beings who are so great and powerful that they could squash us or even this entire planet in one step. This we learn from Vedic information. These demigods (*sūrayaḥ*) are in charge of all the operations of the universe.

### The Absolute Truth

Vyāsadeva says that he is meditating upon that individual regarding whom even the *sūrayaḥ* or demigods are illusioned (*muhyanti yat sūrayaḥ*). We may be ignorant of the Supreme Lord, but Vyāsadeva says that even the *sūrayaḥ*, the demigods who are far greater than us, are also illusioned about the Supreme. Thus no matter how great one is in the material world, he cannot know God by his material qualifications because God is completely autocratic and can never be intimidated. There is no one who can come even close to equality with God.

If the prime minister of an important foreign country wants to visit the United States, immediately the presi-

dent must allow him to do so because the president and the prime minister are on equal terms. But if an ordinary, insignificant citizen wanted to see the president, he would be refused. Even if he threatened to cause trouble, the president would not even consider listening because he cannot be intimidated. However, although an ordinary politician may have an equal, there is no one who can equal God, not even the great demigods who are mightier than we. The demigods are also illusioned by His *tri-sargaḥ* or His threefold material energy, which consists of goodness, passion and ignorance. They have become illusioned by the *amṛṣā*, or the "almost reality." One may see a mirage of water in the desert, but that is an "almost reality." Actually there is water, and there is a desert, but the water does not exist in the desert. Similarly, the so-called happiness and distress that we experience in material life are not factual but "almost real." They are illusions conducted by the agency of *tri-sargaḥ*, the threefold aspects of the illusory energy of the Lord.

Vāsudeva is He by whom even the greatest intellects, controllers and demigods are illusioned. Sometimes we see magicians who can perform sleight-of-hand tricks and bewilder us. We think that a card is in one place, but the magician produces it from another. In this way he creates an illusion by his dexterity. The Supreme Lord upon whom Vyāsadeva is meditating is the supreme magician. His dexterity is so grand that He can trick anyone. That is a further item for meditation. God, however, is *nirasta*, or never illusioned, because He is the controller of illusion itself. This is another aspect of the Supreme Lord. He is never under the influence of *māyā* (illusion) but is the controller of *māyā*. *Māyā* serves Him just as magic serves a magician. Therefore it is stated, *sadā nirasta-kuhakam*: "God is eternally free from illusion."

Vyāsadeva concludes by saying, *satyaṁ paraṁ dhīmaḥi*. *Satyam* means truth, *param* means the Supreme or the Absolute, and *dhīmaḥi* means "I do meditate upon." Therefore Vyāsadeva says, *om namo bhagavate vāsudevāya*: "I offer my respectful obeisances unto Vāsudeva, Kṛṣṇa, who is the son of Vasudeva and Devakī." *Satyaṁ paraṁ dhīmaḥi*: "He is the Supreme Absolute Truth. Upon Him I meditate." ❏

Vyāsadeva concludes by saying, *satyaṁ paraṁ dhīmaḥi*. *Satyam* means truth, *param* means the Supreme or the Absolute, and *dhīmaḥi* means "I do meditate upon." Therefore Vyāsadeva says, *om namo bhagavate vāsudevāya*: "I offer my respectful obeisances unto Vāsudeva, Kṛṣṇa, who is the son of Vasudeva and Devakī." *Satyaṁ paraṁ dhīmaḥi*: "He is the Supreme Absolute Truth. Upon Him I meditate." ❏

## "Hearing is the beginning of understanding."

—His Divine Grace A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA

The most potent method for self-realization in this age is to hear the transcendental sound vibration of Kṛṣṇa's name and glories from the lips of a pure devotee. The International Society for Krishna Consciousness is now making this sound available in a wonderful new series of Kṛṣṇa conscious cassette recordings.



Available from

**GOLDEN AVATAR PRODUCTIONS** 3764 Wateka Avenue, Los Angeles, Cal. 90034

*Songs of the Vaiṣṇava Ācāryas*. Chanted by His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda to the accompaniment of tambura, mṛdaṅga drum and harmonium, these songs by

the great spiritual masters in the disciplic chain reveal the essence of pure devotional service. Includes spoken translations and elaborate purports. 5 C-60 stereo cassettes (SP8-12) each: \$3.00/complete set: \$14.50

*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam Series*. Classes by Śrīla Prabhupāda on India's most advanced text of spiritual knowledge. Includes chanting of the Sanskrit *mantras* and elaborate, enlightening explanations of each verse. 8 C-90 stereo cassettes (SB2: 1-8) each: \$4.00/complete set: \$30.00

*The Yoga System*. The complete explanation of the sacred instructions of eightfold *yoga* revealed in *Bhagavad-gītā*. 7 C-60

cassettes (BG6.1-7) each: \$3.00/complete set: \$20.00

*Ecstatic Chants of the Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement*. The Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* and selected transcendental prayers and songs chanted in praise of Kṛṣṇa. Recorded live in New York, Boston, Los Angeles and New Delhi. 6 C-90 and C-60 stereo cassettes (KT 1-7) each: \$3.00/complete set: \$20.00

THE MESSAGE OF THE SPIRITUAL MASTER. Songs and Lectures by His Divine Grace.

*The Hare Kṛṣṇa Mantra*. C-90 stereo cassette (SK-0): \$4.00

*The Govinda Album*. C-90 stereo cassette (SK-1): \$4.00

*Prayers for the Mercy of Kṛṣṇa* (the *Vande 'Ham Record Album*). C-90 stereo cassette (SK-2): \$4.00

*Arrival of the Pure Devotee*. C-60 stereo cassette (LA72-1): \$3.00

*Reviving our Eternal Consciousness*. C-60 stereo cassette (LA72-2): \$3.00





# Letters

The editors of *Back to Godhead* welcome correspondence pertaining to the subject matter of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. All letters will be personally replied, and correspondence of special interest will be published regularly.



Photo: Vilāsavāgraha dāsa

## Your Grace:

Please accept this letter with Love . . . K-Mart; San Fernando. We have talked with two of your boys at different times. Both had a very negative outlook towards the people they meet.

Do not believe this is in any way as it should be.

These boys happen to represent God. This comes from within. Their outlook must have mercy. We realize this; therefore handpick these little peaces [sic]

of heaven to place in the middle of these people. Or else it will defeat your purpose.

Love Is. Let it be as it is; with Love or not at all.

My prayers be with you. . . and I beg yours with me.

Yours in God, Blessed Be,  
Lynne Ludwig

## My dear Lynne Ludwig,

Please accept my blessings. I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter from California, and I have noted the contents carefully, although due to extensively traveling and preaching in a tour in India I have not had the opportunity to reply you at length until now. Your complaint is that you have met two of my young disciples in California and they appeared to you to have "a very negative outlook towards the people they meet." Of course, I do not know the case and what the circumstances are, but kindly forgive my beloved disciples for any unkindness or indiscretion on their part. After all, to give up one's life completely for serving the Lord is not an easy thing, and *māyā*, or the illusory material energy, tries especially hard to again entrap those who have left her service to become devotees. Therefore in order to withstand the attack of *māyā* and remain strong under all conditions of temptation, young or inexperienced devotees in the neophyte stage of devotional service will sometimes adopt an attitude against those things or persons

which may possibly be harmful or threatening to their tender devotional creepers. They may even overindulge in such feelings just to protect themselves, and thus they will appear to some nondevotees, who are perhaps themselves still very much enamoured by the material energy of *māyā*, to be negative or pessimistic.

But the actual fact is that this material world is a miserable, negative place, full of danger at every step; it is *duḥkhālayam aśāśvatam*, a temporary abode of death, birth, disease and old age, a home of suffering and pain only. To come to the platform of understanding these things as they are is not very common, and therefore persons who attain to it are described as "great souls."

*mām upetya punar janma  
duḥkhālayam aśāśvatam  
nāpnuvanti mahātmānaḥ  
saṁsiddhiṁ paramām gatāḥ*

This means that those who have understood that the material worlds are places of misery and temporariness (*duḥkhālayam aśāśvatam*) never return here again, and because they are *mahātmānaḥ*, the great souls, Kṛṣṇa keeps them with Him because they have qualified themselves to escape this nasty place by becoming His pure devotees. This verse is spoken by Kṛṣṇa, or God Himself, in *Bhagavad-gītā* (Bg. 8.15). Who can be a more final authority? The point is that to make advancement in spiritual life, one must view everything material with a pessi-

mistic eye unless it is utilized to serve and please Kṛṣṇa. We are not very much hopeful for any lasting pleasure or satisfaction for our deepest cravings within this realm of gross matter.

You refer to the word "love" several times in your letter, but the actual fact is that there *is* no love in this material world. That is false propaganda. What they call love here is lust only, or desire for personal sense gratification:

*kāma eṣa krodha eṣa  
rajoguṇa-samudbhavaḥ  
mahā-śano mahā-pāpmā  
viddhy enam iha vairiṇam*

Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna, His disciple, that "It is lust only. . . which is the all-devouring, sinful enemy of this world." (Bg. 3.37) In the Vedic language there is no word for materialistic "love" as we call it in the present day. The word *kāma* describes lust or material desire, not love, but the word which we find in the *Vedas* for actual love is *premā*, meaning one's love of God only. Outside of loving God there is no possibility of loving. Rather, there is lusty desire only. Within this atmosphere of matter, the entire range of human activities—and not only every activity of human beings but all living entities—is based upon, given impetus and thus polluted by sex desire, the attraction between male and female. For that sex life, the whole universe is spinning around—and suffering! That is the harsh truth. So-called love here means "you gratify my senses, I'll gratify your senses," and as soon as that gratification stops, immediately there is divorce, separation, quarrel and hatred. So many things are going on under this false conception of love. Actual love means love of God, Kṛṣṇa.

Everyone wants to repose his loving tendency in some object which is in his opinion worthy. But the question is one of ignorance only, because people have a poor fund of knowledge about where to find that supreme loveable object who is *actually* worthy to accept and reciprocate their love. People simply do not know. There is no proper information. As soon as you

have some attachment for anything material, it will kick you upon the face, deteriorate and disappoint you. It's bound to dissatisfy and frustrate you. That's a fact. But these young boys in your country, and all over the world, are accepting, "Yes, that is a fact," and they are getting the right information from Kṛṣṇa:

*bahūnām janmanām ante  
jñānavān mām prapadyate  
vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti  
sa mahātmā sudurlabhaḥ*

"After many births and deaths, he who is actually wise surrenders unto Me, knowing Me to be the cause of all causes and all that is. Such a great soul is very rare." (Bg. 7.19) Again Kṛṣṇa uses that word *mahātmā*, "great soul." Therefore our devotees that you have met are not ordinary boys and girls. No. They are to be considered actually wise, great souls because they have experienced in many births the miserable disease of material life and have become disgusted. Therefore they are seeking higher knowledge—they are seeking something better—and when they find Kṛṣṇa and surrender unto Him, they become *mahātmās* who are actually situated in knowledge. This material world is just like a prison house; it is a punishing place meant to bring us to that point of becoming disgusted, surrendering at last to Kṛṣṇa, and going back to our original nature of eternal life in bliss and complete knowledge. Therefore it is to the credit of these devotees that they have done what is *sudurlabhaḥ*, very rare amongst all men in human society.

By surrendering to Kṛṣṇa one will find the final object in which to invest his love: God. Love of God is present in everyone, just like fire in an unlit match, but it is covered over. But if one somehow or other develops his dormant love of God, and Kṛṣṇa becomes his supreme adorable object, supreme friend, supreme master, or supreme lover, then he shall never again become disappointed or unhappy. Rather, because his loving propensity is rightfully placed,

*mac-cittā mad-gata-prāṇā  
bodhayantaḥ parasparam  
kathayantaś ca mām nityam  
tuṣyanti ca ramanti ca.*

The devotee whose life is surrendered to Kṛṣṇa is always enjoying "great satisfaction and bliss," and he is constantly "enlightened," always positive, not negative, as you say. The advanced devotee is the friend of everyone. The *yoga-yukto viśuddhātmā*, purified soul engaged in loving devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, is *sarva-bhūtātma-bhūtātma*, dear to everyone, and everyone is dear to him. In another place Kṛṣṇa claims that *yo mad-bhaktaḥ sa me priyaḥ*, His devotee who is very dear to Him, *adveṣṭā sarva-bhūtānām maitraḥ karuṇa eva ca*, is not envious but is a kind friend to all living entities. The devotee is supposed to be, furthermore, equal to everyone (*paṇḍitāḥ samadarsinaḥ*). He never discriminates, saying, "This one is good, this one is bad." No.

These are descriptions of the more advanced stages of Kṛṣṇa consciousness that devotees get by development of mature knowledge. At present many of our students are young boys. They are learning gradually, and the process is so effective, certain and authorized that if they stick to it they will come to the right point, as you say, of loving. But that love is not material, so it should not be judged on the false sentimental platform of ordinary mundane dealings. That is our point. Therefore to say they are not loving may be true from the materialists' point of view. They have given up affection for family, friends, wife, country, race and so on, which is all based upon the bodily concept of life or flickering sense gratification. They have become a little detached from *māyā's* love, or lust, and they want Kṛṣṇa's love, or endless, fully rewarding love, but they have not yet developed to that point, that's all. We cannot expect that all of a sudden your countrymen who are addicted to so many bad habits will give up eating flesh, taking intoxicants, having illicit sex life and so many other nasty things and overnight

become great self-realized souls. That is not possible. That is utopian. But just being initiated as Kṛṣṇa's devotee puts one in the topmost category of human society. *Sa buddhimān man-uṣyeṣu sa yuktaḥ kṛtsna-karma-kṛt*: "He is intelligent in human society. He is in the transcendental position, although engaged in all sorts of activities." (Bg. 4.18) And although such a devotee may not yet have advanced to the highest level of spiritual understanding, still he is to be considered the most exalted personality, regardless of any temporary frailties.

*api cet sudurācāro  
bhajate mām anyanya-bhāk  
sādhur eva sa mantavyaḥ  
samyag vyavasito hi saḥ*

"Even if a devotee commits the most abominable actions, he is to be considered saintly because he is properly situated." (Bg. 9.30) As you will say, "To err is human." Therefore in the neophyte stage we may always expect some discrepancies. Kindly see the thing in this light and forgive their small mistakes. The big thing is that they have given everything, even their lives, to Kṛṣṇa—and that is never a mistake.

Your ever well-wisher,  
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

\* \* \*

#### *Most Worshipable Śrīla Prabhupāda,*

Please, accept my most humble obeisances. It has been more than two months since *Janmāṣṭamī*, and I am still cherishing the vision of your lotus face while seeing you off at Pittsburgh Airport. After hearing you for six days and seeing you every day, my ears and eyes have become lusty. The ears do not want to hear anything but your transcendental voice, and the eyes do not want to see anything but your lotus face. I have been living in the Chicago temple since *Janmāṣṭamī*. Every day I keep looking at your picture on the *vyāsāsana*, thinking that some day you will speak. It hasn't happened yet, and having become impatient, I decided to

write to you so that you can hear me more distinctly.

All my desires to work as an engineer seem to have dwindled by seeing your lotus face in New Vṛndāvana. I am enjoying the nectar of devotion more and more every day. I have been going on *saṅkīrtana* every day for an average of six to eight hours (sometimes even fifteen) ever since I have been in this temple. I love to go out on *saṅkīrtana* and distribute your books, and Kṛṣṇa is rewarding me with unexpected pleasure.

Every day I am realizing more and more the magnanimity and potency of your *saṅkīrtana* movement, which is giving me the strength to resist the attack of this dense forest of the material world with its wild animals, the *karmīs* (materialists). The people in general are taking one major step every day towards degradation. I cannot understand their royal march towards hell, even though I would have been one of them had you not picked me up from this holocaust. This is more true with Indians than anybody else, especially those present in this country. They do not know anything about Vedic philosophy. They do not have any religion but Cārvāka's "eat, drink and be merry." *Varṇāśrama-dharma* is existing only in a skeleton form. The *brāhmaṇa* class has become almost extinct. The society is a headless body. How can there be any peace and prosperity when they do not know what peace and prosperity mean? How can there be brotherhood when they do not know who their father is? How can there be *Rāma-rājya* [the kingdom of God] without Rāma [God]?

Amidst all the hypocrisy, quarrel, chaos and disarray, you have come forward with this nectar of *Bhāgavata-dharma*—the function of soul. Only very fortunate people—those who are picked up by the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself—can taste this nectar, as confirmed in the *Gītā*:

*bahūnām janmanām ante  
jñānavān mām prapadyate  
vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti  
sa mahātmā sudurlabhaḥ*

"After many births and deaths, he who is actually in knowledge surrenders unto Me, knowing Me to be the cause of all causes and all that is. Such a great soul is very rare." (Bg. 7.19) This *saṅkīrtana-yajña* is undoubtedly the highest of all *yajñas* [sacrifices], and anybody, whether a *brāhmaṇa* or *sūdra* or even worse, pure or impure, can take part and get the highest benediction—*bhakti* unto Adhokṣaja, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Out of causeless mercy, you have planted these seeds in our hearts and chosen us to go all over the whole world and plant the seeds of devotion in everyone's heart. Only through your transcendental mercy can one approach Ajita, Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa has given you all powers to purify anybody. The *Bhāgavatam* confirms this:

*yat pāda-saṁśrayāḥ sūta  
munayaḥ praśamāyanāḥ  
sadyaḥ punanty upasprṣṭāḥ  
svar-dhunyo 'nusevayā*

"O Sūta, those great sages who have completely taken shelter of the lotus feet of the Lord can at once sanctify those who come in touch with them, whereas the waters of the Ganges can sanctify only after prolonged use." (*Bhāg.* 1.1.15)

One of the most important and attractive things about you is that you started this movement after being on the *brahma-bhūta* [self-realized] platform, on which one does not have to perform any duties and has already realized the Absolute Truth. Every word in *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* and the *Bhāgavatam* volumes is a proof of this fact. Only a fool can read *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* and not understand that you are an absolutely realized soul. (A nice Indian friend of mine has already read your *Gītā* twenty-five times.) Your purports in *Bhāgavatam* are so powerful and honest that sometimes I simply cannot take so much mercy and cry in ecstasy. *Bhāgavatam*, the most ripened fruit of the Vedic tree, is naturally very beautiful and is made sweeter by Śuka, its speaker. Your final touch in the form of purports has made it unbearably beautiful.

I was so stupid and dumb. Although born in a pious *brāhmaṇa* family and brought up nicely, I went off the track and was living like a *dvija-bandhu* [degraded *brāhmaṇa*]. Somehow or other Kṛṣṇa gave me the intelligence to realize that Your Divine Grace is my only hope, and I surrendered to you wholeheartedly. Ever since then, there is always bliss in my life. The emptiness and vacant mood that I was feeling before have been replaced by enthusiasm and satisfaction. In you I have seen a wonderful lake with cool water in the midst of a plain desert. You have given me both *jñāna* [knowledge] and *viñāna* [realization]. You have given me the vision that *vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti* [Kṛṣṇa is everything], knowing which I do not have to know anything else. I have no qualifications whatsoever, but because I have accepted you as my master and guide, and whatever I know comes from you, I am sure of success, even with all my imperfections and defects.

*api ced asi pāpebhyaḥ  
sarvebhyaḥ pāpa-kṛttamaḥ  
sarvaṁ jñāna-plavenaiva  
vṛjinaṁ santariṣyasi*

“Even if you are considered to be the most sinful of all sinners, when you are situated in the boat of transcendental knowledge, you will be able to cross over the ocean of miseries.” (Bg. 4.36)

My attachment for you is not at all sentimental. Until now, my definition of love was in terms of superficial material relationships with parents, family and friends. Now, since I have developed feelings for you, I am beginning to realize what love is like and how perfect and blissful a loving relationship can be. From time immemorial I have been rotting in this hell, and of trillions and trillions of living entities, how fortunate I am to be born at the same time that you have appeared and to be accepted by you as your spiritual son. You are not an ordinary saint or sage. You can very easily be considered as influential as Christ, Mohammed or Śaṅkarācārya, and yet they did not preach the complete transcendental truth or *Bhāgavata-dharma*. Like the twelve *mahājanas*, you are a *mahā-*

*bhāgavata* [fully realized devotee] who has influenced this whole age. All Vaiṣṇavas for all time must pay you their obeisances. Oh, Prabhupāda, may I lose my legs, may my hands be cut off, may I lose the sight of my eyes and my ability to speak, but may I never lose the shelter of your lotus feet. I do not know if I can develop love for Kṛṣṇa in this life, but if I can develop love for you, that will be enough.

Anyone who comes in contact with you directly or indirectly will be benefited. The best way one can come in contact with you is through your books. If the degraded and misguided Indians can read your books, they may understand the real purpose of *Bhāgavatam* instead of being brainwashed by professional reciters. There are hundreds of misleading *Gītā* commentaries. The foolish impersonalists and dangerous cheaters have turned people to near atheism. There is no systematic teaching of *Bhagavad-gītā* nowadays. My teachers taught me about the French revolution and American revolution, but they never mentioned *Bhagavad-gītā* in school. Hence I very sincerely believe that they should read your books. I am wondering if I can translate your books into Gujarati. Gujaratis seem to me to be comparatively a little more God conscious than others, and materially they are happier too. If they can read your books, they may become fortunate enough to recognize you. I would very much like to know your opinion about this and would like to be advised as to how I can start it, if you approve it. I am not an expert linguist, but I was a good language student in high school, and your language is fairly simple and straightforward. Hence it would not be difficult to translate them. Also, I was a very good Sanskrit student in high school, although I later gave up Sanskrit to become an engineer. I can understand more than half the meaning of the verses even now. I am wondering if I should continue this and learn the language well, which should not take a long time.

I did not expect to make this so tedious and long a letter. But I do not know how to write nicely and briefly. However, if you read my broken language, then the goddess Sarasvatī will be pleased with me, and I will be able to write better in the future.

*yasya deve parā bhaktir  
yathā deve tathā gurau  
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ  
prakāśante mahātmanaḥ*

“Only unto those great souls who have implicit faith in both the Lord and the spiritual master are all the imports of Vedic knowledge automatically revealed.” (*Śvet. Up.* 6.23)

It is true that you are present in your books, but as I read your books more and more, I feel your separation more and more, and my desire to see you becomes more and more intensified. I am looking forward to seeing you when you visit Chicago next spring. Please accept again my prostrated obeisances.

Eternally at your lotus feet,  
Yaśomatinandana dāsa Brahmācārī

*My dear Yaśomatinandana,*

Please accept my blessings. I am in due receipt of your letter, and I am so much pleased to read it. Your letter is so nice that I am advising that it be published in *Back to Godhead*. In the meantime you can immediately begin translating all our books into the Gujarati language. All these translations will be published in series in our Gujarati BTG, and if you are serious about it, you can be the Editor. So immediately begin translating and regularly produce books in Gujarati, and it will be a great service for you. The more you render service, the more you will be enlightened by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Thank you once more for understanding our philosophy very nicely.

Hoping this will meet you in good health,

Your ever well-wisher,  
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami



## THE LITERATURE OF THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

### Bhagavad-gītā As It Is Complete Edition

A masterpiece of scriptural literature, *Bhagavad-gītā* is a sacred "song" in the form of a battlefield dialogue between Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, His friend and disciple. Kṛṣṇa, acting as Arjuna's adviser, instructs him in the science of self-realization, teaching him how to live as a devotee of the Lord and to thus reach the eternal spiritual world while continuing to perform his earthly duties. *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* is the most complete and authoritative transmission of this timeless scripture in print and the only one that does not obscure the true spirit of Kṛṣṇa's teachings.

1,000 pages, 44 full-color illus., hardcover \$10.95, paperback \$4.95

### Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

The spiritual importance of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is described in the great literature itself: "This *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the literary incarnation of God, and it is compiled by the great sage Vyāsadeva, the incarnation of God. It is meant for the ultimate good of all people, and it is all-successful, all-blissful and all-perfect." As God is all light, all bliss and all perfection, so also is *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. One can derive from the study of the *Bhāgavatam* all the benefits that are possible to be derived from the personal presence of the Lord. It carries with it all the transcendental blessings of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa that we can expect from His personal contact.

First Canto: Vol. I-\$6.50, Vol. II-\$6.50, Vol. III-\$6.50

Second Canto: Vol. I-\$6.50, Vol. II-\$6.50

### KṚṢṆA the Supreme Personality of Godhead

Here, in two magnificent volumes, His Divine Grace presents the eternal, blissful pastimes of the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa as they are revealed in the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the ripened fruit of all Vedic literatures. The *KṚṢṆA BOOKS*. 750 pages of transcendental stories, richly illustrated with 82 full-color reproductions.

Vol. I, 400 pp., 58 illus., \$6.95 Vol. II, 370 pp., 44 illus., \$6.95  
Set of both volumes, \$12.95

The *KṚṢṆA BOOKS* are now available in a wonderful paperback trilogy set. These pocket-size books include all of the original text and the most exquisite of the color illustrations. Pocket-size bliss! A beautiful slip case is also included free with the complete set of books.

Per Vol. \$9.95 Per Set \$28.99

### The Nectar of Devotion

How to experience pure spiritual emotions and relationships in direct conjunction with the Supreme is the subject matter of the most intimate and personal textbook in the world, *The Nectar of Devotion*, by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

404 pp., hardcover \$6.95, paperback \$3.95

### Teachings of Lord Caitanya

Lord Caitanya's most confidential teachings have been compiled and translated by His most dedicated follower, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. This is the text for advanced students of the science of love of God.

292 pp., 11 illus., hardcover \$5.95, paperback \$3.95

### Śrī T̄sopaniṣad

All the major scriptures of the world indicate that Godhead, or the Absolute Truth, is not impersonal, but is a person. *Śrī T̄sopaniṣad*, in its eighteen *mantras*, describes the form and nature of the Absolute Truth.

137 pp., hardcover \$3.00, paperback \$1.95

### Easy Journey to Other Planets

This book is an authentic discussion on the techniques and practice of the *yoga* system by which one can leave this body for travel to anti-material planets where life is blissful, eternal and full of knowledge.

96 pp., paperback \$1.25

### Kṛṣṇa Consciousness: The Topmost Yoga System

This book presents the most authorized process of *yoga* practice in God realization, without any deviation from the original Vedic scriptural literature. This present volume forcefully exposes the speculative systems which depart from love of God as the ultimate goal of *yoga*.

110 pp., paperback \$1.25

### The Perfection of Yoga/Beyond Birth and Death/ On the Way to Kṛṣṇa/Rāja-Vidyā

These four books give a general introduction to the transcendental science of *bhakti-yoga* and how it can be practiced in the modern world. Śrīla Prabhupāda explains in a clear and simple manner how anyone can perfect his life and attain spiritual realization in this lifetime.

\$.95 per Vol.



# ACYUTA, DRIVE MY CHARIOT!

by Patitoddharaṇa dāsa (ISKCON EDINBURGH)

“Acyuta, drive my chariot!” This was the command given by Arjuna, the great devotee of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, unto Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra. Lord Kṛṣṇa, who was attracted to Arjuna’s attitude of pure love, was acting as the chariot driver of His devotee. Their conversation on the chariot has been recorded by the great sage Śrīla Vyāsadeva, and it is still well known in many languages in many lands, for their talks comprise the verses of the scripture *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Arjuna is addressing Lord Kṛṣṇa in the 21st verse of the First Chapter as “Acyuta,” or “the infallible Lord.” The main point of understanding in this connection is that when Kṛṣṇa sees His devotee surrender to Him without motivation, He becomes attracted to serve His devotee. Sometimes we have difficulty understanding certain apparently contradictory things about the Supreme Personality of Godhead. For instance, the *Īsopaniṣad* says that He is far away and He is very near as well. The *Brahma-saṁhitā* says that although He is the oldest, He still appears as a fresh sixteen-year-old youth. Thus it is difficult for us to understand how the Supreme Lord of all living entities can act as the servant of His devotee, for it seems that the devotee should serve His master, Lord Kṛṣṇa. However, for one who is a pure devotee such as Arjuna and who only wants to serve Kṛṣṇa without self-motivation of any sort, Kṛṣṇa is easily purchased. Indeed, Kṛṣṇa becomes the servant of His devotee. In this understanding is found the confidential truth about devotional service.

Arjuna’s unmotivated desire to serve is rare in its purity. Mostly persons who have initial attraction for God would approach the Lord as their order supplier and request Him to send them wealth. The pure devotee, however, does not even desire to seek from the Lord the boon of liberation from material life. Thus by his service atti-

tude, born of unalloyed love, the devotee wins the highest benediction and remains free of material contamination in much the same way as a lotus, although apparently resting on the water, remains untouched by it. Kṛṣṇa derives much pleasure in serving such a surrendered soul as Arjuna.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, desiring to deliver the fallen conditioned souls, appeared 500 years ago in Navadvīpa, India, as Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. From His pastimes as Caitanya Mahāprabhu there is much to be learned, for His entire mission was to teach the rarest gift, that of pure, unadulterated love of God. Lord Caitanya would walk through jungles, towns and villages, enchanting the countryside with His singing of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. One day, as He was traveling, He came across a poor *brāhmaṇa* who was looking over a copy of *Bhagavad-gītā*. The *brāhmaṇa* was not a puffed up erudite scholar but a simple and pure devotee. He was holding his copy of *Bhagavad-gītā* in a very loving and gentle way. On the cover was a picture of Kṛṣṇa driving the chariot of His devotee Arjuna. Tears of love flowed forth from the lotus eyes of the devotee, and a joyous smile adorned his lips. The Lord asked His devotee, “Why are you crying, O *brāhmaṇa*?” The devotee replied, “My spiritual master has asked me to read all the chapters of *Bhagavad-gītā* each day. But the difficulty is that I do not know how to read. Thus I am simply turning the pages, but when I think how kind Kṛṣṇa is for consenting to drive the chariot of Arjuna, I am moved to cry in this way.”

Lord Caitanya felt the ecstasy of devotional pleasure on hearing the purified feeling expressed by His devotee. He exclaimed, “You are the one who is truly learned in the real message of *Bhagavad-gītā*!” With these words, the Lord embraced the *brāhmaṇa* to His breast, and the *brāhmaṇa*’s good fortune was unbounded. The *brāhmaṇa*

had simply appreciated Lord Kṛṣṇa’s causeless mercy upon His pure devotee Arjuna, and for doing so he received the highest of benedictions, the Lord’s loving embrace, for Kṛṣṇa is attracted by pure devotional service. As the *brāhmaṇa* understood Kṛṣṇa’s attraction to drive the chariot of His devotee Arjuna, let us also try to understand it.

Sometimes the class of men whom we refer to as “impersonalists” or “Māyāvādīs” make the mistake of trying to become the Supreme Lord Himself. They have invented the idea that by somehow or other “merging” themselves with God they can suddenly acquire all the opulence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead who is the controller of both the spiritual and material worlds. Kṛṣṇa, who is the actual knower of all things, is not particularly pleased with men who simply try to usurp His exalted position. Such men are jealous of the Lord, and their goal of merging into the Lord’s bodily effulgence is the same as the goal of the enemies of God, the demons, who, foolishly enough, face the Lord in battle and are consequently vanquished by Him. The impersonalists think that simply by merging they will receive the highest glories, but actually Kṛṣṇa is more pleased with His surrendered devotee, whose position is that of a most humble servant. It is to him that the highest benedictions actually go.

For the present age Lord Caitanya has recommended the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, and He has declared that humility is a prerequisite qualification for uttering the holy name. He said in His *Śikṣāṣṭaka*: “One can chant the holy name of the Lord in a humble state of mind, thinking himself lower than the straw in the street; one should be more tolerant than a tree, devoid of all sense of false prestige and ready to offer all respect to others. In such a state of mind one can chant the

holy name of the Lord constantly.” Therefore, the humble man who actually aspires after the Lord’s grace will add this chanting process to his life in a humble and sincere way, and thereby by purified chanting, he will become the actual attractor of Kṛṣṇa.

Service to the Lord is actually the constitutional eternal engagement of the living entity. The Lord is complete in Himself, yet because He desires to enjoy and share in relationships of countless unique varieties, He has ex-

no question of choice, there would be no question of love. He is most pleased, therefore, when a living entity turns to serve Him. It is just as if a rich landowner were offered a small cracker by His child at the dinner table. Even though the offering is insignificant in comparison to the father’s great wealth, he is not concerned with its meager material value. He is concerned with the loving sentiment with which the offering is made. One of the Lord’s names is Ajita, or “the unconquerable.”



**THE REAL SCHOLAR OF BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ** In the ecstasy of devotion, Lord Caitanya embraced the pure-hearted *brāhmaṇa* who had appreciated Kṛṣṇa’s mercy.

panded Himself into the living entities. Without His expansions He would not be complete. The conception of “Lord” is not complete if there is no one to overlord. Therefore His completeness is found in His being both infinite and infinitesimal. He has given each soul the choice of serving Him or serving one’s own self apart from Him. If there were

Many demons attacked Lord Kṛṣṇa while He was on this planet, but they all failed and were subsequently conquered by His strong arms and superior prowess. For the devotee, however, who is pure in thought, word and deed, Ajita, the unconquerable, becomes *jita*, or conquered. The devotee, blessed by Kṛṣṇa, is the most happy of all persons.

One mustn’t think that Kṛṣṇa requires the devotee to serve for any length of time before the benediction of pure devotional service is awarded to him. Surrender to Kṛṣṇa may take only a moment if the devotee so desires. This is exemplified in the life of Bali Mahārāja, who had accepted a spiritual master who was unqualified due to his desires for personal aggrandizement. Bali’s master, Śukrācārya, guided him to conquer the celestial kingdom of Indra. As Bali did this, the rightful proprietors of the heavenly kingdoms, the demigods headed by Indra, were all chased away. The vanquished demigods, however, were all devotees of the Lord; hence they prayed that He return them to their posts so that they could continue their service of universal administration. In order to answer the prayers of His devotees, the all-āuspicious Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa incarnated Himself as Vāmanadeva, a beautifully effulgent *brāhmaṇa* boy who was no larger than a dwarf. He is often simply called the dwarf incarnation. He proceeded at once to the kingdom of Bali Mahārāja, which rightfully belonged to the demigods.

When Vāmana arrived, Bali Mahārāja was most attracted to His extreme beauty. Especially noticeable was Vāmana’s glowing effulgence. Śukrācārya, Bali’s spiritual master, recognized that this dwarflike *brāhmaṇa* must be the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Therefore, knowing that a *brāhmaṇa* approaches the rich for the purpose of begging something from them, he declared to Bali, “Don’t give this boy anything!”

Bali, on the other hand, wanting to offer something, ran forward to the *brāhmaṇa* boy out of spontaneous attraction, declaring that whatever He wanted He could have. Bali was ready to surrender everything, but Lord Vāmanadeva declared that since He Himself was a *brāhmaṇa*, He needed only enough land upon which to sleep. A *brāhmaṇa* is very humble in his material needs. Therefore, Lord Vāmanadeva requested of him, “Please give Me three steps of land.”

“Is that all You want?” Bali asked.





**INCONCEIVABLE POTENCY** Expanding to gigantic size, Lord Vāmanadeva covered the entire universe in two steps.

“Please ask for whatever You would like.”

Vāmanadeva said, “Three steps of land will be enough.”

With that, the Lord took His first step. He expanded Himself into gigantic size with His inconceivable potency, and His first step covered the entire lower and middle planetary systems. Then, expanding to universal size, He took His second step, and with this step the Lord covered the entire heavenly planetary system. He said to Bali Mahārāja, “Now I have covered the entire universe in two steps. You promised to give Me three steps. Where can I put My third?”

Bali Mahārāja realized that the inconceivable Lord, the Personality of Godhead, had come to take from him his ill-gotten gains. He surrendered unto the Lord and said, “You may put Your third step on my head, my Lord.” The Lord was pleased with Bali’s surrender, and placing His lotus foot on Bali’s head. He benedicted him with pure devotional service. That is the Lord’s kindness. Kṛṣṇa was pleased with Bali’s offering of everything he could give, including his own self. If one rejects all his past nonsense and surrenders unto Him fully, that is called pure devotion. Bali Mahārāja, in his surrender, rejected an unqualified spiritual master who was interested only in greedy motivations. For this, Bali Mahārāja is called a *mahājana*, or great devotee of the Lord. There are twelve such *mahājanas* who are accepted as great authorities of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness devotional process.

Lord Vāmana, in order to further bless His *mahājana* devotee, gave him a kingdom in the lower regions of the universe. The Lord is so kind to His pure devotee Bali Mahārāja that there, on the planet of Bali Mahārāja, He acts as his personal doorman. Whenever someone comes to see the *mahājana* Bali, the Lord in His four-armed form is there to greet the guest. That is Kṛṣṇa’s love for His pure devotee who took only a second to surrender. Kṛṣṇa does not mind offering service to His pure devotee Bali as a doorman any more than He minds offering to drive the chariot of Arjuna, for the Lord is the servant of His servant. He is

attracted by the loving attitude of His devotee.

Lord Kṛṣṇa enjoys with all His blissful devotees in unending relationships (*rasas*). Sometimes Kṛṣṇa, who is the slayer of gigantic and fierce demons such as Kaṁsa, Hiranyakaśipu and Rāvaṇa, allows His cowherd boy friends to conquer Him in play fighting while they sport as children in Vṛndāvana, India. When the Supreme Personality of Godhead appears, He manifests all the pastimes of an ordinary person. Therefore, He accepts a mother, and He displays His pastime of growing up. But Kṛṣṇa never gets old. Nor does He have to meditate to “become God.” He is God on the lap of His mother or playing with His friends. He is eternally the supermost person, the one without a second. In sporting with His friends, Lord Kṛṣṇa plays blissfully with His pure devotees. These are souls who have acted with the desire only to serve Him for thousands of births. By His mystic potency the Supreme Lord has allowed these boys to forget that He is God in playing with Him. They simply think of Him as their most wonderful friend. To add to their joy, He allows these boys to defeat Him in their wrestling matches. He carries His triumphant playmate Śrīdāmā on His shoulders, and in that way they play together through the Bhāṅḍhīravana Forest. Here again the unconquerable becomes conquered, through pure devotional love.

Lord Kṛṣṇa is not only the supreme servant of His pure devotees who find never-ending bliss in their relationship of transcendental reciprocation, but He is the supreme servant of everyone. Everyone accepts the beautiful gifts that Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is giving us, such as the sunshine, the rain, the natural beauty of the countryside, the fragrance of a flower, the service of the farm animals, the milk of the cow, and many others, but the pure devotee glorifies the Lord by offering these things to Him in love. The pure devotee wants only to give transcendental pleasure to the spiritual senses of Kṛṣṇa. Thus by his offerings the devotee glorifies the Lord, but even if one does not make any offering to the Lord, the Lord is so magnani-

mous that He continues to serve the living entity’s needs in every way. The insignificant ant gets his lone grain of rice each day, and the elephant gets his hundred pounds of hay.

It is simply out of ignorance that the atheistic man thinks that there is scarcity and that abundance can be the result of his work alone. By the so-called progressive work of the modern demonic civilization, millions of people have unnecessarily suffered physically and psychologically from the influences of over-industrialization and resultant social degeneration and conflict. The Vedic system, however, is one of simplicity in which a man can live happily with his wife, perform his occupational duty and remain happy serving the Lord with the gifts that He provides. His most valuable asset, his breath, he also offers to God, simply by singing His name, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. Thus the devotee uses Kṛṣṇa’s energy to please Kṛṣṇa in pure devotional service.

Clumsy modern man, in his ignorance of Kṛṣṇa’s devotional service, tries to compete with the Lord. But although he may create a plastic flower or fruit, no man can create a real fruit or flower as the Lord can. A man considers himself powerful if he can create many machines, but no one can create a machine that can duplicate itself long after the original inventor has gone away, although the bodies of humans, aquatics, plants and the other species of life created by the Lord can do this without difficulty. Only the devotee of the Lord, with his clear vision, sees properly that these wondrous manifestations of nature are actually the perfect creations of Godhead. Thus he never competes with Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa loves him for his service attitude.

Despite the arrogance of modern speculators who try to deny the glories of the Supreme Lord by theorizing that “in the beginning there was a chunk,” the Lord undauntedly provides for all his sons equally, even if some of them are rascals. The Lord is forbearing, like the earth, which yields its fruits equally for everyone. No one is denied. The pure devotee, always absorbed in trance by blissfully singing

the names of God, uses these elements of nature in the consciousness of a servant, like one who borrows a car from a friend to do his friend an errand. The devotee walks through this world and uses everything here, but in the consciousness that Kṛṣṇa is both the provider and proprietor. Thus the devotee quickly goes back to Godhead, whereas the demon must revolve through the cycle of millions of births and deaths until he turns his attention to God and becomes His devotee also. As a good father is the supreme servant of his family, so the Supreme Father, the Personality of Godhead, is ever waiting for us, His long lost sons, to turn to Him. Kṛṣṇa is equal to everyone, but just as a mother turns her favor to the child who calls for her, so Kṛṣṇa is especially fond of His devotee who chants Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Once Nārada Muni, the great devotee whose eternal mission is to serve Kṛṣṇa by spreading the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, came to visit Lord Kṛṣṇa when the Lord was in His role as a king. Despite His regal opulence, Lord Kṛṣṇa bowed down His head and offered Nārada a seat on His royal throne. Because he knew that it was Kṛṣṇa’s desire to thus teach the world how to respect a saintly person, Nārada accepted the service. But this was only to teach us. Nārada or any pure devotee never makes the mistake of trying to make the Supreme Lord serve him. The pure devotee’s only joy, his only relish, is to use every quickly fleeting moment of his life in serving Kṛṣṇa. He never asks for a moment that Kṛṣṇa serve him. When Kṛṣṇa sees His loving servant engaged in this selfless way, He Himself becomes attracted, and the Supreme Personality of Godhead becomes the servant of His devotee. That is real love; that is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. ❏

To develop and express love of Godhead, one should adopt the simple method taught by Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, (center, right) by chanting the holy names of the Lord—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.





# “ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

IS THE LITERARY INCARNATION OF GOD

It is all-successful, all-blissful, and all-perfect.

It is as bright as the sun.

Thus persons who have lost their vision  
due to the dense darkness of ignorance

in the age of quarrel shall get light from it.” *Śrīmad-Bhagavatam*, 1.3.40, 43

ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

The Sublime Science of the Supreme Personality of Godhead

His Divine Grace

A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA